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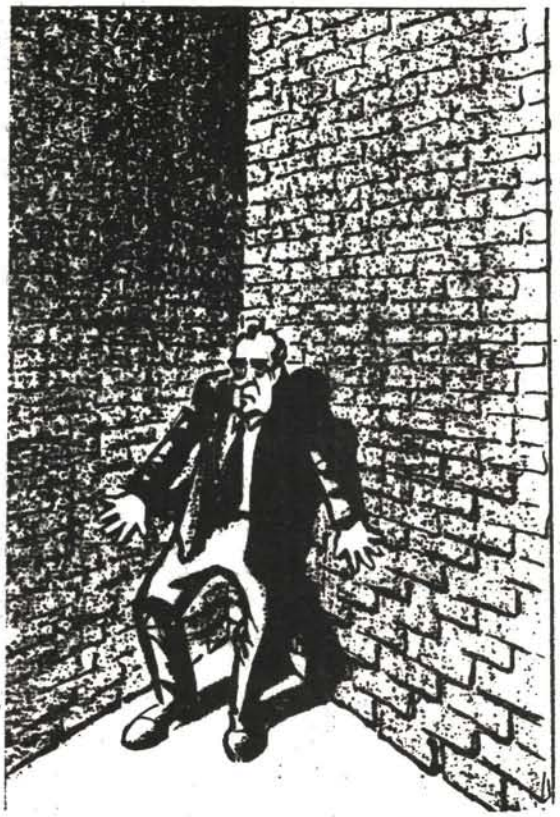
THE IMPEACHMENT SAGA

CAREY McWILLIAMS



Mauldin, Chicago Sun-Times

BEYOND WATERGATE
The Culture of Fascism
Herbert S. Levine

VOLATILE & PIVOTAL
Middle American Radicals
Donald I. Warren

Gordon Graham Dowling ***ukio Mishima***

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EDITORIALS

Nixon's Sick Confession

If impeachment were a criminal process, the President's statement on the June 23, 1972 conversations with Haldeman would constitute a plea of guilty on Articles I and II as approved by the House Judiciary Committee. What the President did was to offer up "the smoking gun" for which some of his Republican supporters in the House had been clamoring. Indeed his abject confession reads as though it were in direct response to John Doar's major contentions in support of Articles I and II. The President concedes that he knew about the cover-up almost from the day of the break-in. He concealed this guilty knowledge from press, public, aides, counsel, courts, Congress, the Department of Justice and the FBI. By his own admission, he has obstructed justice and abysmally failed to take care that the laws were faithfully executed. In issuing this belated confession he has probably signed his own political death warrant as well as sealed the fate of his key aides who were scheduled to go on trial in September.

Viewed in any light, the confession is bizarre, if not downright pathological. The President of the United States publicly confesses that he has lied, dissembled, and served as chief conspirator in a plot to obstruct justice. He concedes that his impeachment by the House is now a foregone conclusion. But then, in a cool swift switch, he asks that his high crimes and misdemeanors should be exorcised as oversights. Only a mind out of touch with reality could be guilty of such gross self-deception. Having shamelessly destroyed friends and colleagues, nearly wrecked his own party, misled to their detriment his supporters, betrayed public trust and forfeited respect and credibility, he yet asked the Congress to continue him in the office to which he was re-elected by corrupt means in 1972 and has since consistently degraded! His confession, it might be noted, did not come when it might have been in order; on the contrary he continued the cover-up until he had finally run out of options. Even then he held back until Mr. St. Clair told him to disclose the transcripts of the June 23, 1972 tapes, or else. So on this count alone the confession was spurious and a further affront.

Oddly enough the devastating impact of the confession —notably on his erstwhile supporters but also on the general public—was out of all relation to its value as news. From the outset it should have been clear that the President was the chief conspirator; the cover-up could not have been projected without his knowledge and approval. What is surprising is that it succeeded as well as it did for as long as it did. What is also surprising is the obtuseness of the chief conspirator, supposedly a master politician, in his handling of what he elected to regard as a political problem. His aides speak of his being "driven from office" but this is nonsense; Richard Nixon convicted Richard Nixon. The tapes and his own statements have been primarily responsible for his downfall. Of course he faced difficult problems, some of which proved to be unmanageable. He could not, for example, stop the plea-bargaining once the trek to the Special Prosecutor's office got under way. And he had to be mindful of the dangers facing co-conspirators Mitchell, Haldeman and Ehrlichman. Even so his tactics were amateurish, his strategy clumsy and improvised, his self-serving public statements ludicrous and, with rare exceptions, consistently damning. But there has always been a large element of myth in the notion of Richard Nixon the master politician. The record shows that his victories at the polls were largely won by default and that when he faced strong and credible opposition, as in 1960 and 1962, his performance was wretched. It took no great skill to defeat Humphrey in 1968—even so the margin was narrow—or to defeat McGovern in 1972. The latest tapes show Haldeman advising that it would be much more difficult to get the undecided to vote for him than it would be to get them to vote against McGovern, which, of course, is what happened.

Few historic confessions match Nixon's for moral squalor, irredeemable tackiness, poverty of imagination, and absence of authentic personal feeling. What his confession has done is to unite the country—or nearly so—in a demand for his removal. But eagerness to achieve this end has prompted proposals as outrageous as his confession, such as a grant of Congressional immunity for criminal acts, assurance of pension and other financial aids, immunity from subpoenas to testify or produce documents at the trials of others or before Congressional committees, and the privilege of destroying tapes, memoranda, and other material connected with Watergate. A bipartisan consensus may exist that Nixon should not be prosecuted for crimnial acts related to the cover-up conspiracy, but the notion of a blanket grant of immunity—or even a "sense of the Senate" resolution—as the price of resignation should be curtly rejected. Better that he be tried by the Senate than bribed to resign while others stand trial for crimes he commissioned. His tax matters should be handled precisely as any citizen's would be. Tax returns are a private, individual matter, not an aspect of his incumbency. The manner in which Agnew's case was handled was bad enough, if perhaps justifiable in the special circumstances; but to waive examination of Nixon's returns would be a major mistake. As for the suggestion that he be permitted to destroy government property or be excused from responding to a subpoena once out of office, the answer should be a most emphatic "no dice," nor should any consideration be given to promises of clemency. Such proposals reflect not only the eagerness to see the Nixons exit from the White House but current misconceptions about the Presidency. The President is not a monarch.

The Impeachment Saga

Adoption by the House Judiciary Committee of three articles of impeachment represents a remarkable political achievement in view of the corruption of our political culture which began long before the Watergate scandals. Rejection of two additional counts, each of which had merit, was politically unavoidable; the "fragile coalition" that approved the first three articles would not accept them. But the two rejected articles, both thoroughly aired

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in the nationally televised debate, were important to the outcome, for it was the entire pattern of Nixon's conduct that finally convinced the majority. A library of books will be written about the impeachment saga but "at this point in time" a few notes are in order.

First some perspective is needed. One of the earliest impeachment initiatives was the memorandum—prepared by William L. Standard of the New York bar—which the Lawyers Committee on American Policy Towards Vietnam presented to certain members of Congress in the spring of 1972. Then on May 18, H.R. 989, a resolution calling for impeachment, was introduced by Representatives Conyers, Abzug, Chisholm, Ryan, Dellums, Rangel, Stokes, Mitchell and Fauntroy. This action, it should be emphasized, was taken *a month before* the Watergate break-in. As *The Nation* pointed out at the time (editorial, May 29, 1972), the resolution had merit but was primarily designed to induce the House Judiciary Committee to air some of the charges against Nixon. But as we also pointed out, the 1972 Presidential campaign was just then beginning to heat up and the representatives of the people were not about to consider impeaching a President in May when voters would have an opportunity to pass judgment on his conduct in November.

So the idea of impeachment seemed to be stillborn. But then as Watergate continued to unravel, the Ervin committee was able to convey a vivid impression of the cast of characters and the dimensions of the scandal to a nationwide audience. Even so impeachment was slow to gain supporters in part because the trial of President Andrew Johnson had left some cloud on the process and press, public and politicians were wary of it. But the disclosures continued—there was no end to them—and the President notably failed to dispose of the charges that were being leveled against him; on the contrary his responses and defensive behavior confirmed the mounting suspicion that the charges were probably true. So the idea of impeachment became first thinkable and then unavoidable. A long series of events helped in the process: the special Congressional elections, the lengthening list of indictments and mounting number of convictions, and the ramifications of the various inquiries. And then came a series of blockbusters: the dismissal of the Ellsberg case, the disclosure of the tapes made more damning by telltale cuts and erasures, the ouster of Archibald Cox as Special Prosecutor, and publication of the transcripts. These developments, coupled with the President's "stonewalling," his constant equivocations and his refusal to resign, gave impetus to the drive. Still the thought that he might actually be impeached seemed somewhat unreal to those in and out of Congress who had not joined initially in demanding it, and they held the balance of power. But impeachment became virtually irresistible with the failure of the President's diversionary tactics, the Supreme Court's 8-to-0 decision on the tapes, and opening of the House Judiciary Committee hearings. Opposition more or less collapsed when it became clear that the anti-impeachment forces were sharply divided and that conservative support for the President had suddenly eroded. In retrospect it is clear that once impeachment had been placed on the agenda it consistently gained momentum, at first slowly and then with amazing accelera-

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tion as the House Judiciary Committee hearings got under way. A fantastic story that will be retold many times.

As the impeachment saga unfolded it provided a wealth of headlines for more than a year aided by a succession of surprises, lucky breaks, quick turns and unforeseeable happenings. Perhaps no phase of the saga is more surprising than the President's belief that he could cover up the cover-up or his astounding insistence that Watergate was "the thinnest scandal" in our history and would have been a mere "blip" if he had not been President.

But it would be a mistake to regard the impeachment saga as the product of accidents, leaks and lucky breaks. True, there were accidents, such as the arrest of the burglars and the disclosure that the Oval Office had been wired. But the process which culminated in adoption of the first article of impeachment on July 27, at twenty-one seconds after 7:05 P.M. (EDT), was based on more than accidents: it represents a substantial—and surprising—democratic achievement.

The credits are obvious. First to such relatively unsung heroes as the Watergate night watchman and the police detail that responded to his call; to McCord, whose letter to Judge Sirica set the larger investigations in motion and, of course, to Judges Sirica and Gesell and the eight Justices of the Supreme Court who participated in the unanimous decision on the tapes; to all those anonymous individuals, particularly in the FBI, who provided the "leaks" which were largely responsible for many of the key disclosures; to three Nixon appointees—Richardson, Ruckelshaus and Cox—who refused to do the President's bidding when it conflicted with their clear duty; to an assortment of bureaucrats, notably in the IRS, who honored their oaths; to those sections of the press without whose persistent, courageous and intelligent digging the story might never have been made known; to Senator Ervin, his colleagues and staff, and to the Special Prosecutors and their staffs, for taking on and ably discharging unpleasant assignments, and to Chairman Peter Rodino for his effective leadership, his patience, courtesy and tact, and his determination to be fair. The performances of his colleagues, nationally televised, have elicited nearly unanimous praise. The tone of the hearings was admirable; low-keyed (for the most part), without rancor and with a minimum of demagoguery and point-making. Some of the individual contributions were outstanding but, by and large, the conduct and participation of the entire membership were admirable. Televising the hearings turned out to be an excellent idea; it put the committee members on their best behavior and gave a large nationwide audience an education in the issues and the supporting evidence. Because the hearings were televised, the public had to be convinced that the coverage was fair and accurate: if not present, it could see and hear what was going on. A credit, too, for the fine staff of the committee and Messrs. Doar and Jenner; in the end it was the staff reports—the marshaling of the evidence—that cinched the case. Those who had studied the case from the start were never in much doubt but, for a long time, the public lacked a clear overview which the committee hearings have now provided. All the silly talk about "the murder weapon" and "the smoking gun" has now been dissipated. As Rep. L. Richardson Preyer of North Carolina—not a member of the committee—has noted: "In most court cases, it's pretty hard to find a smoking gun," and Jack Germond of the Washington *Star-News* has reminded us that Henry David Thoreau once observed that "some circumstantial evidence is very strong, as when you find a trout in the milk." Finally a credit line for the people—or for many of them at any rate—who, although at first reluctant to face the facts and not wanting to believe them, were finally forced by the weight of the evidence to accept conclusions which they could not avoid. In this painful process they were aided by our traditional worship of the Constitution which stood us in good stead in this crisis. Few moments of the hearings were more memorable than when Rep. Paul Sarbanes quite solemnly said: "I ask every doctor and lawyer and every insurance agent and accountant in the country what kind of land you would be living in if a group of hired hands have the power to come into your office in the dead of the night . . ." or when Rep. James Mann reminded his colleagues that "the next time there may be no watchman in the night."

Satisfaction in the action finally taken does not imply that all is well or that affirmative action by the House and Senate on articles of impeachment will preclude a similar threat in the future. Catharsis is not reconstruction; a purge of Nixon and his crowd will not dispose of the issues that the impeachment proceedings have disclosed. Debate on impeachment has served an important purpose; something like a consensus on what constitutes proper grounds for impeachment has emerged and, on the eve of the bicentennial, the words of Madison, Franklin and Hamilton have taken on fresh meaning. But impeachment has proved to be a slow, cumbersome process fraught with difficulties; it should be reconsidered in light of what has happened. The British vote of "no confidence" has merit but implies stronger party organizations than we now have or are likely to have for some time, and there are other variables as well; but it should be explored. No doubt a standard of sorts has been set for the guidance of future Presidents, but the problem of a misuse of Presidential power remains. The Ervin committee did not grapple with it; perhaps Senator Mondale's subcommittee will. But why shouldn't the House Judiciary Committee make affirmative recommendations? It has the facts and enjoys public confidence. The corruption of the political process has not been stopped. Campaign reform legislation has not been adopted. Legislative restraints have not been imposed on such agencies as the CIA and the IRS. Political and economic power are dangerously concentrated and a new occupant of the White House will not eliminate the threat which this concentration poses. Similarly the social and cultural undercurrents out of which a Fascist movement might emerge or which might set the stage for a future *coup d'état* by a far more skillful operator than Nixon, are there for all to observe (see article on p. 103).

The United States celebrated its centennial in the wake of a devastating Civil War, the scandals of the Grant administration, and charges that a Presidential election had been stolen. Observance of the bicentennial will take place under somewhat similar circumstances. In 1876

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there was a great demand for "reconciliation" without genuine reconstruction and, as a consequence, the most acute problems then facing the nation were shelved, an action for which we have since paid a very heavy price. This experience could be repeated. Relief at having Nixon out of the White House could precipitate a mood in which the unresolved issues of Watergate would be pushed aside. This must not be permitted to happen. The corruption of the Nixon Administration is quite unlike that of the Grant administration; today's crisis is more dangerous and more difficult to resolve than the crisis of 1876. But by the same token, our resources are greater and the opportunities more promising. The divisions left by the Civil War which imposed a brake on progressive politics for a century are being rapidly transcended. The failure of Reconstruction deferred the struggle for full civil rights for nearly a hundred years; but substantial gains have been made which even this Administration has been unable to reverse, although the movement is stymied at the moment.

The difference between then and now is symbolized by the impressive figure of Rep. Barbara Jordan—the bitterness of black hopes betrayed in 1876 echoed in her words: "Today I am an inquisitor . . . hyperbole . . . would not overstate the solemnness that I feel right now. My faith in the Constitution is whole, it is complete, it is total, and I am not going to sit here and be an idle spectator to the diminution, the subversion, the destruction of the Constitution"—and her colleagues, Representatives Conyers and Rangel. Indeed seven of the nine sponsors of H.R. 989 calling for impeachment were blacks. American democracy was heavily handicapped in 1876 by the failure to safeguard the civil rights of freedmen and the handicap persisted well into the second half of this century. But there is a black presence in American politics today, at every level, in most regions, and it finds a counterpart in the emergence—this time for real—of a new South.

The debate on Watergate has been a profoundly educative experience and it will continue for a long time. A recrudescence of McCarthyism is always possible but seems unlikely. The new political energies generated in the 1960s have not been entirely dissipated by any means. Nor have the lessons of the war in Vietnam been forgotten. Strong undercurrents of political unrest are evident even if the direction they may take is not. Vice President Gerald Ford may well be discredited by his support of Nixon and the names of Ronald Reagan and John Connally can now be scratched from the Presidential sweepstakes. So prospects for a real bicentennial celebration *sans* Nixon and of a major political upheaval in 1976 cannot be discounted as wholly fanciful; the potential, at least, exists.

CAREY MCWILLIAMS

Madison Says 'No'

Madison

A few minutes past midnight on Wednesday, July 24, Madison, Wis. (population 175,000) became the first American municipality officially to oppose the construction of a nuclear power plant. Acting on a resolution sponsored by Mayor Paul R. Soglin [see "The Battle of Wisconsin" by James Rowen, *The Nation,* March 20, 1972], the council voted 12 to 9 (with the body's leading environmentalist absent) to "direct the City Administration to formally oppose before any and all federal, state and local governmental agencies all permits and permission to construct or in any way implement the proposal to construct" the Koshkonong Nuclear Plant in Fort Atkinson, a small agricultural town 30 miles southeast of Wisconsin's capital city.

The Koshkonong plant, a twin-tower, 1800-megawatt behemoth, is sponsored by a powerful combine of Wisconsin's largest utility corporations. The four companies, Wisconsin Public Service Corp., Madison Gas and Electric, Wisconsin Power and Light, and Wisconsin Electric Power Company, together supply 77 per cent of the state's electrical energy. For all intents and purposes, the consortium *is* the power industry in the state of Wisconsin.

The proposed operation will rip off more than 1,400 acres of choice farmland, suck out up to 50,000 gallons of water per minute from nearby Lake Koshkonong, and run on a Westinghouse light-water nuclear reactor already banned from importation into Great Britain for safety and design reasons.

Utilities routinely win approval for their proposals before legislative and administrative bodies, and the Madison council rebuke was of historic proportions. The Madison vote means the city does not want a nuclear plant in its back yard, and generally opposes nuclear fission as being a hazardous, unreliable and inadvisable method for producing electrical energy.

Nearly two hours of debate preceded the final vote. The council heard from dairy farmers whose acreage is threatened by the plant; University of Wisconsin professors presenting health and safety information, the presidents of two of the involved utilities, and Myron Cherry, a Chicago environmental attorney, who is counsel to a growing regional group called Concerned Citizens of Wisconsin organizing statewide opposition to the plant. The 12-to-9 vote illustrates the broad political disquiet that nuclear plants tend to generate. In addition to the City Council's liberal-to-radical members who voted to support Mayor Soglin's proposal, several political moderates, and the single most vociferous conservative member, also cast their ballots with the majority in opposition to the plant.

The Koshkonong Nuclear Plant is likely to be on the cutting edge of southern Wisconsin politics for years to come. Before the Madison vote, the struggle was lining up as one between a group of Fort Atkinson family farmers and a consortium of state-regulated monopolies with assets exceeding $2 billion. Now Wisconsin's second largest city—its city council, Mayor and administrative staff—has joined its rural neighbors and together they stand a good chance of beating the utilities' scheme to turn the heart of Wisconsin's dairyland into an environmental time bomb. Residents of "The Hot River Valley" [see *The Nation*, August 3] should take note of the example set by the Madison city council.

JAMES ROWEN

Administrative Assistant to Mayor Paul R. Soglin

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MaRVs IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

ROBERT C. ALDRIDGE

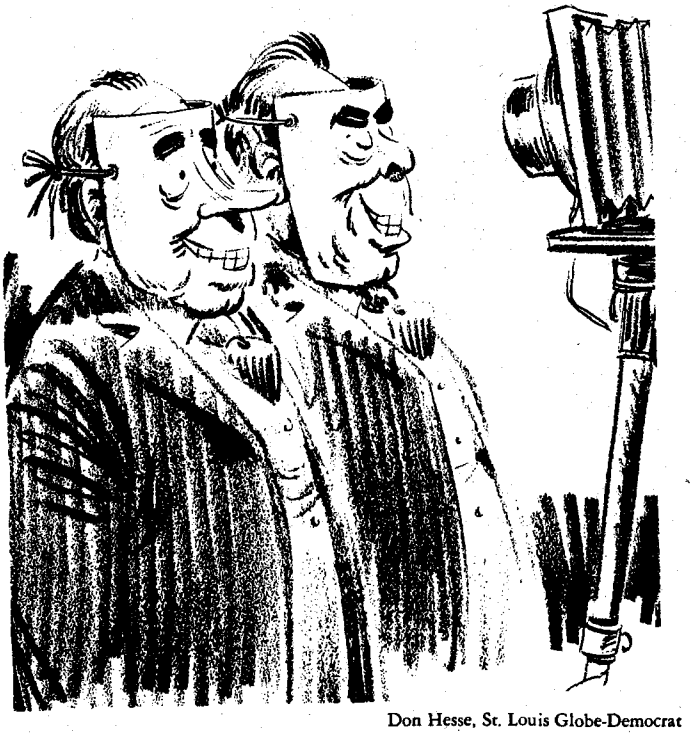
We've been deluded again. The MK 500 maneuvering reentry vehicle planned for Trident was misrepresented during recent Congressional hearings. Rear Adm. R.Y. Kaufman, director of the Strategic Submarine Division and Trident Program Coordinator, testified that the MK 500 is being designed only to evade enemy interceptors, does not have terminal accuracy and is, in fact, less accurate than present MIRVs. "It is a dodging target, and that is all," explains the Admiral as he points out that it does not sense approaching interceptors but merely goes through pre-programmed S-turn type maneuvers that make it difficult, if not impossible, for tracking radar to get an accurate "fix" on which to aim an interceptor. Playing heavily on semantics, Admiral Kaufman also announced a name change for the MK 500—it will be called Evader "so that it will be clear to everyone . . . that the MaRV development we have launched into is designed to evade interceptors."

Although correct as far as he went, the Admiral failed to tell the whole story. In "MaRVing the MIRVs" (*The Nation*, April 13) I pointed out the contradiction between an expensive Evader program and the anti-ballistic missile restrictions of SALT I. Since they are allowed only 200 ABM interceptors, the Soviets have virtually no defense against our thousands of deployed warheads. If we take SALT I seriously, the MK 500 as an evader makes no sense.

However, we should also look at Evader in light of Defense Secretary Schlesinger's new targeting doctrine which accounts for more than $250 million of the fiscal 1975 budget. When the Pentagon is paying that much for precision and an increased warhead yield it is inconsistent to spend $45.7 million on a vehicle that is even less accurate than those deployed. And it is unusual for the military to make a show of such inconsistency.

But the confusing picture comes into focus when it is realized that the purported simple flight tests of the MK 500 do, in fact, develop the structural, aerodynamic and material technology for future MaRVs that can home in on hard targets. Coupled with potential breakthroughs in anti-submarine warfare and detection (which also consume a huge chunk of budget), such an instrument could allow the United States to perpetrate a pre-emptive first strike against a potential enemy's attack missiles. Consider, then, the outcome of a so-called Evader development program.

The weak spot on a maneuvering body is the nose. Aerodynamic loads and heating are significantly more complex than on present MIRVs and the predicted levels seriously challenge available materials. A crash program



Don Hesse, St. Louis Globe-Democrat

to develop an advanced material was initiated years ago, but flight tests are required for proofing. In addition, empirical data are needed to validate computer models of nose tip erosion, body ablation, and the effect of heat on structural capabilities. The ability to maneuver, in itself, requires sound information on everything from aerodynamic profiles to guidance and control responses. MK 500s will be heavily instrumented to acquire this formidable array of data. And it will all be directly applicable to future terminally guided MaRVs. During fiscal year 1975, the MK 500 will be in advanced development stages (work started more than five years ago but was highly classified), ostensibly to make things difficult for a handful of Soviet ABMs.

Defense Research and Engineering Director Dr. Malcolm R. Currie confirms the MK 500's role in developing an accurate MaRV. He describes a program to explore a homing reentry body as comprised of two elements: "Being able to make a reentry body that can perform some kind of maneuver and then [to] conceptually design . . . some kind of sensor that will permit, in essence, that kind of accuracy we get with our air-to-surface precision weapons." He then points out that the MK 500 program will create a maneuvering reentry vehicle in the terminal descent phase. And one need look only to the Advanced Ballistic ReEntry Systems (ABRES) proposals to see where the second element is being implemented.

Lieut. Col. Leo J. Koerkenmeier, program monitor of ABRES, explains a brand new $20 million venture: "This concept would employ a maneuvering reentry vehicle with a control system *similar to that of existing maneuvering reentry vehicles,* but in addition would contain a sensor, or sensors, which use characteristics pecu-

Robert Aldridge worked sixteen years as an aerospace engineer for Lockheed Missiles and Space Company and was a group leader responsible for design of the MK 500 MaRV. He has now ended his complicity in the weapons race.

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liar to the target area to update the reentry vehicle's position and guide it to the target" (*emphasis added*). Colonel Koerkenmeier also points out that the technology being developed under the ABRES program could be transferred to any other ballistic missile system, including Trident.

It is obvious that the MK 500 and ABRES programs complement each other. And when Trident System Project Manager Adm. Harvey E. Lyon denied that we are "developing and deploying" a highly accurate weapon for Trident which the USSR might see as a first-strike capability, he was using the deceptive terminology so common in sales pitches. We are not "developing and deploying" such a system—at least not yet—*but we are developing it.*

It is highly probable that the Russians do see MK 500 as destabilizing the present nuclear balance. There are indications to that effect. Russia has always escalated its activity in reaction to America's advances in weapons technology. Pragmatic evaluation of the Soviet's present intense activity on four new generations of missiles with increased throw weight (they always compensate for our finesse with brute strength) indicates yet another reaction to our inordinately swelling Pentagon budget.

And the fallacy of suggesting that MaRV will put us in a stronger position during SALT II negotiations is evident when one remembers MIRV. That, also, was supposed to be a bargaining chip during SALT I talks, but was offset by an ambitious silo and missile submarine building program in Russia. The resulting Interim Agreement allowed the USSR a slight numerical advantage of submarines and offensive missiles because of our technological lead and also to halt their reactive program. Now we are re-enacting that same folly with MaRV while the USSR is developing four new ICBMs.

A valid bargaining chip for SALT II and other disarmament conferences currently in session would have been a substantial reduction in military appropriations. Had we seriously slashed the Pentagon proposal it would have demonstrated America's sincerity to de-escalate and would have put pressure on Russia to reciprocate. But mouthing tongue-in-cheek rhetoric while writing a hundred-billion-dollar check for the Defense Department fools no one. We Americans eagerly swallow military scare talk while ignoring the critics. We should be as concerned about activities behind the chain-link fences of our own defense plants as we are about those taking place behind the iron curtain. The MK 500 has outmaneuvered public knowledge of the truth and has now launched us into the most dangerous threat of the century—the era of counterforce strategy and nuclear hair triggers. □

BEYOND WATERGATE

THE CULTURE OF FASCISM

HERBERT S. LEVINE

In *The Nation* of September 10, 1973 ("Watergate: Surreptitious Entry"), I suggested that Richard Nixon belonged in the historical category of unsuccessful Fascist leaders. Developments since have confirmed this description, particularly in regard to the adjective "unsuccessful." Anyone concerned with the preservation of constitutional government in this country as a minimum political goal is therefore entitled to a sigh of relief at the Administration's current bankruptcy, always assuming that the political process now under way will reach its logical conclusion with a successful impeachment. But unfortunately for our peace of mind, politicians do not exist in a vacuum. This is as true of Nixon as it was of Hitler, even though Nixon never founded a mass movement. If Nixon is a Fascist politician, then there must exist a corresponding environment out of which he came, and off which he fed, and which he tried, however unsuccessfully, to exploit as a basis for his political power. If fascism can exist in the contemporary world as a political phenomenon in the narrowest sense, then it must exist as a broader cultural phenomenon as well.

This perception, should it be confirmed, has vital practical implications. If the unsuccessful Watergate *Putsch* rested on cultural factors independent of the fate of the Nixon Administration, then these factors may well make it possible for some more able or more fortunate leader to succeed where Nixon failed. The exorcistic rites currently being practiced in Washington may succeed in ridding us of one particular evil spirit, and they have already severely limited his capacity to work harm. But if American culture is in any sense "Fascist," or if it contains genuinely Fascist elements, then the "possession" may reoccur in another form at almost any time. It is therefore sensible to examine our contemporary culture for signs of the symptoms traditionally associated with Fascist behavior.

Fascism is most commonly associated with the practice of violence, delight in violence and the glorification of force of all kinds. Of these we certainly have no lack. The most obvious evidence is in the crime rate, and in the often hysterical reactions of urban Americans to the crime problem. The heightened fears of all city dwellers have weakened the traditional liberal defense of the rights of defendants and convicted criminals. Weak-

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ened resistance to vigilantism and to increased police powers have led to an escalation of violence all around. The physical brutality practiced in this country has also been increasingly "politicized," again in apparent similarity to the Fascist pattern, which associates violence with political and racial group hatreds. The statistics leave no room for doubt. Crime is in good part an extension of the race problem. This statement is hardly weakened by adding poverty as an intermediate factor between crime and race. And frankly political crimes, bombings and kidnappings by "liberation" groups such as the SLA and the Weather Underground, seem likely to increase. Right-wing terrorism has been with us for a long time, and we have grown used to it. Terror on the Left is a relatively new phenomenon, at least since the demise of the pre-World War I anarchist movement. To be sure, our political terrorists are as yet small potatoes compared to their foreign counterparts, but the apparent significance of their deeds is magnified because the foreign news demonstrates the ability of terrorism to feed on itself.

A key to the acceptance of Italian Fascism and German National Socialism was the existence of a cultural trend which encouraged the admiration of violence, even by those who did not actually practice it. Of such trends we also have no lack. The political desperadoes are in part responsible, although counter-trends are noticeable (most interestingly, in the development of the Black Panther Party). Despite some prominent recantations, all that silliness of a few years ago about power and gun barrels has left its mark. But the major propagators of the violence cult are to be found in the entertainment industry, and to a lesser extent in the news media. Violence is both news and entertainment, whether it is real or fictional. Entertainment violence and political violence often merge, as political trends are picked up and exploited for profit. Black super-heroes and cops who shoot first and inform suspects of their rights afterwards are the most obvious examples of this type of exploitation. They have filled the void left by the discrediting of the old-fashioned war film. More sophisticated films, on the level of *Clockwork Orange, Straw Dogs* and *Deliverance,* contribute their part to making violence a respectable, as well as popular, part of our culture. They lead to an intellectual acceptance of brutality as an innate, and not always undesirable part of human nature—as perhaps it is.

Closely associated with the Fascists' cult of violence was their anti-intellectualism and their glorification of the irrational and mysterious. Carried to its extreme by some Nazis, this led to an interest in the occult and to a revival of pagan customs as an expression of the primitive "Germanic spirit." Once again, it is not difficult to find parallels. Interest in astrology, in the occult, in "the Devil" and in virtually any new pseudo-scientific or religious sect that can buy publicity has become a gold mine for clever promoters and made several international fortunes. Panaceas and new keys to the universe proliferate. Their effect on the young is particularly startling.

North of the Alps, at least, fascism was closely associated with anti-Semitism, and all Fascists believed in the demonstrable superiority of the white race. Bussing is a confusing issue that lends itself perfectly to a thinly disguised (sometimes quite open) racism. Still more strikingly parallel to the Fascist cultural experience has been the revival of "scientific" theories of innate group superiority, which are being used to justify school segregation along both class and racial lines. Herrenstein and Shockley are the best-known advocates of this approach, but they are only two among many, and we are now witnessing the formation of a "school" of psychological theory around various notions of group superiority.

All of these cultural trends promote social and political polarization. The middle on any issue weakens, as the extremes grow stronger and, paradoxically, come to resemble one another. Those who oppose violence quickly find that they must fight; those who advocate love quickly learn to hate. The extremes encourage each other, understanding that the collapse of the middle will strengthen both sides, and make programs which previously appeared insane seem perfectly reasonable. This type of polarization was characteristic of societies which harbored Fascist movements, and it is certainly characteristic of our own.

The clearest symptom has been the weakening of traditional American liberalism. What in the long run is to become of a liberal opponent of "police brutality" and "racism" who lives in deathly fear that one of his black brothers will knock him over the head outside his front door? Sooner or later, he must change his principles or his neighborhood, or both. The process has been highly visible in New York City since the school disputes of the late 1960s. New York's traditionally liberal Jewish community has found itself not only the physical and economic target but also the ideological target of a black-Spanish offensive. A sense of being attacked at home has been combined with worries over Israel's difficulties in the Middle East. The result has been an extraordinary turnabout in Jewish political and cultural attitudes, most extreme in the case of the Jewish Defense League. And the Jews are mentioned here only because they serve as a particularly clear and strategically important example of a general cultural trend.

America, in short, has become a much more uncomfortable place than it used to be for the politically aware liberal. The truth of this statement is so crushingly obvious that it requires no further proof. But the statement by itself has no explanatory, analytical or predictive power. The apparent similarities between our own and the Fascist cultural experience are distressing enough in themselves, but it is by no means clear what, if any, political significance they possess. Cultural trends may come and go without producing political changes of any importance. "Fascism" is not just a convenient catch-all for political and cultural nastiness.

A very brief (and necessarily oversimplified) consideration of the historical background of fascism may help the analysis along. In Europe, between the wars, certain social groups suffered acutely from economic instability and were prevented by their class traditions from expressing their distress in the Socialist forms used by the industrial working class. These groups included independent artisans and shopkeepers, small farmers, and underpaid and underorganized white-collar workers, as

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well as middle-class youths who found it difficult to plot their future in a changing and uncertain economic world. The collapse of political authority caused by the disasters of war and its aftermath destroyed the traditional channels through which these groups had expressed their opinions and protected their interests; ideologically, they were cut adrift.

Don Hesse, St. Louis Globe-Democrat

These were the classes that tended to accept Fascist solutions for their problems. The economic crisis made cultural trends politically operative. The affected social groups responded to those politicians who mobilized their anger, not against the economic system to which they were ideologically attached but against traditional enemies (Jews, Marxists) and in support of traditional values that appeared threatened (the nation, public decency). The rhetoric of fascism was violent and revolutionary in its phrasing, but what the Fascists actually promised was the restoration of a protective, intelligible and predictable order, which would give security to those groups most threatened by postwar developments. To gain their ends, the Fascists appealed to the cult of violence and strength, to national and ethnic prejudice, to anti-intellectualism and to an admiration of thoughtless action.

Fascism is an expression of political anger, rooted in a perception of economic distress, and directed at irrelevant targets. I first advanced this notion in *The Nation* in two articles published in the issues of May 4 and June 8, 1970. I suggested that this phenomenon was by no means limited to Europe between 1918 and 1945; that it was in fact to be found in contemporary America. The four years that have passed since have revealed at least one major error on my part. I seriously underestimated the extent of the economic crisis, which should have been visible even then. It is the current crisis that makes contemporary cultural phenomena so terribly dangerous, rather than simply obnoxious. They provide the means by which the economic crisis may be exploited in a Fascist direction.

It would be a mistake to consider all expressions of violence, bigotry or irrationality as amenable to *direct* Fascist exploitation, or as an expression of a Fascist state of mind. The activities of the SLA, for example, cannot be considered as in any sense "Fascist." There is no such thing as "fascism on the Left," although there may be a great deal of unpleasant activity going on in that direction. Part of the definition of fascism is its channeling of economic anger away from total confrontation with the economic system. It is for this reason that established economic interests have often been tolerant or supportive of Fascist movements, even when they were disturbed by the violence associated with them. Liberation movements on the contemporary American scene, insofar as they attempt a revolutionary change in the structure of our economy, whatever else they may be, are the very opposite of Fascist. They represent the American equivalent of the European Socialist movements that so alarmed the bourgeoisie after World War I. In other words, they provide one form of the irrelevant enemy—the favorite target of Fascist politicians. A similar role is played by street criminals, drug addicts, producers of "immoral" entertainments, and all others who threaten to produce cultural confusion. In itself there is nothing wrong with cultural confusion, another name for which is "freedom." But at a time of economic crisis groups which find their position threatened economically are particularly likely to mobilize against other, noneconomic threats to their image of themselves and their society.

Other aspects of our cultural scene are direct expressions of Fascist attitudes. It is in the nature of political exploitation that ideas are used without regard to their objective truth. There are, of course, serious practical arguments against bussing to achieve integration, or in favor of increased police powers. But when they are used politically, these arguments do little more than obscure the true debate. They enable individuals who pride themselves on their rational and unprejudiced approach to public issues to convince themselves that a given cause is "right," even if they find themselves in uncomfortable company. What is really involved is the encouragement of a set of illiberal political attitudes in the American electorate, which can be exploited by clever leaders in a Fascist manner. The upset and disorientation created by economic fears, which are in themselves more than justified, can be turned against traditional enemies and mobilized to support traditional values that appear threatened. Since none of this activity helps the economically threatened voter, a vicious circle is created. The more serious the problems, the more irrelevant the response, and hence, the greater the likelihood that the problems will increase. The chances for the establish-

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ment of such a circle are improved by the political activities of interested parties, such as the oil industry, who have every reason to hope that serious economic problems will be neglected.

It is obvious to almost everyone that our political system has no solutions to problems built into a world economy gone out of control. Even such ameliorative measures as the Kennedy tax proposals will have little chance of adoption until they become so attenuated that they lose whatever effectiveness they may originally have had. Americans are confronted with the spectacle of our political leaders acting like a troop of unusually stupid Boy Scouts faced with the necessity of applying first aid to a gushing arterial wound. Unwilling to apply a tourniquet since they have heard it is sometimes dangerous, and unwilling to tear up their shirts to make sufficient bandage material, they instead apply a succession of Band-aids (after long deliberation as to the proper size and shape), on the time-honored principle that something is better than nothing.

It is no wonder that Americans are rapidly losing confidence in politicians—all politicians. In a sense, Nixon is correct when he claims that the economic crisis is more important to the average voter than Watergate. What he may not understand is that in the mind of the electorate the inability of the political leadership to solve economic problems merges with Watergate. If Nixon, who received such a superb mandate from the American people, turns out to be a mean, swearing little crook closely wedded to certain economic interests, what politician will be above suspicion? The economic catastrophe merges with the Watergate revelations to discredit the entire political system and all traditional politicians, in a manner not very unlike what occurred in Italy and Germany in earlier years.

America, then, is possessed of a large, economically distressed group of the sort normally amenable to a Fascist appeal. It demonstrates cultural trends normally associated with countries ripe for the development of Fascist movements. Our own native versions of political and cultural Bolsheviks, and the traditionally hated minorities, provide the obligatory enemies. Our moderate defenses have in good part broken down under the weight of their own irrelevance in a polarized world. Why then no Fascist takeover, or even a clearly identified and well-organized Fascist movement?

Americans have for a long time been fond of saying, "They ought to stand them up against a wall and shoot them," when faced with fellow citizens felt to be in some way threatening or obnoxious. There are no lack of targets. But who is to do the shooting? Where are the storm troopers, and where is the Leader? Up to now, the direct Fascist approach along the lines of the original model has not worked well in America. One of the reasons may be the memory of a terrible war fought against people who shouted in stadiums, marched in uniform without being exactly soldiers, and killed their defenseless "enemies" by the millions. Such groups as the "American National Socialist White People's Party" are probably condemned to remain forever in their present domain of highly specialized political pornography, satisfying the needs only of a small number of very strange individuals. It would be comforting to think that the "Fascist danger" was confined to a few freaks in Nazi uniforms.

SUMMER SCHEDULE

During the summer, *The Nation* will *not* appear on August 24.

It is entirely possible that the massive Fascist potential in this nation will remain only potential because of a few historical accidents. Nixon has fairly conclusively proven that he was not the right man for the job. The right man may never turn up. This would not be surprising. The very conditions that produce a Fascist potential may also confuse, corrupt and mislead those who attempt to exploit it. The history of fascism is littered with pathetic failures. America has been very lucky. It may stay lucky. Or it may not.

But the most likely explanation is that the potentially Fascist situation has not yet existed long enough, given the faith most Americans, at least until recently, have demonstrated in their institutions. In America, patriotism is closely associated with support of the government and its constituted procedures, despite a certain traditional contempt for politicians as a class. Established political institutions have a kind of legitimacy in America they completely lacked in, for example, the Weimar Republic. And until very recently the American voter had every reason to believe that his economic position was good, and that minor problems might be correctable if he voted for one major party or another, or for one particular politician. Since a strong ideological tradition is lacking in American electoral politics, voters have normally swung their support on the basis of their sense of economic well-being. That is, they have voted their pocketbook. In Europe after 1945, with the weakening of traditional political allegiances, a similar voting pattern developed. This type of voting behavior is frequently praised as "rational," but it is so only as long as the economic problems of the moment can actually be solved by available political means, or as long as the problems are so minor that a botched solution will not greatly matter. It should be plain enough that neither is the case today. American political traditions may keep the illusions of rationality alive for some time longer. But for how long? Meanwhile, the system's balance is growing increasingly delicate.

In a nation with similar problems but a very different political tradition, the situation has already been clarified in a striking and significant manner. In Italy, currently struggling with a disastrous economic collapse, the ideological lines of the 1920s and 1930s have never completely disappeared. Economic crisis in the late 1960s produced an offensive on the Left and a revival of fascism on the Right. The development was completed by the current economic collapse. On the Left, a fumbling effort toward a Socialist-Communist alliance is strengthening into something approaching a "Popular Front." On the Right, despite the mumbled embarrassment of some of their leaders, the Christian Democrats find them-

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selves allied with the neo-Fascist Italian Social Movement. On the fringes of both sides, but especially on the Right, the terrorists operate. The old slogans of an earlier day suddenly make sense again.

Interestingly enough, the crystalization of fronts took place over an essentially "cultural" issue that had nothing obvious to do with the economic crisis—the divorce referendum of last May. But now that the traditional battle lines have re-formed, the divorce issue recedes into unimportance and appears for what it was, a cultural issue exploited for its political potential by both sides. The failure of the Christian Democrats to produce any amelioration of the economic crisis, and their poor performance during the divorce campaign, have now made fascism rather attractive to those in Italy desperate to avoid a major social upheaval. The battle will be decided by a simple test of strength.

In the United States, we are not yet that far along, and we cannot in any case expect a repetition of Italian developments. Our traditions are completely different, and it seems unlikely that our economic situation will develop to the Italian point. Failing political clarification of any sort, we drift along. Both Fascist and potentially "anti-Fascist" forces lack bases for growth. A precise line of development cannot be predicted. But it is clear that the Fascist potential has increased greatly since 1970, despite the apparent return of political calm. And the most disturbing thing about developments since that time is that the anti-Fascist front, which seemed on the point of formation in 1970, has almost completely dissipated. □

VOLATILE AND PIVOTAL

THE MIDDLE AMERICAN RADICALS

DONALD I. WARREN

> Eddie Gaska stood at the bar in Novak's. Big hands, steelworker gut. He had just finished a double shift at the steel mill down the street.
>
> "Impeachment? That would hurt the country more than it's hurting now," said Gaska. "I would say let well enough alone."
>
> Novak's Tavern is 300 yards up the cobblestone hill from the gates of United States Steel's Duquesne Works. A beer and a shot, 50 cents.
>
> "You want my honest opinion?" John Kwin slapped his glass down to the bar. "I wouldn't want to see him impeached. But if he resigned, he would be doing the country a favor. Impeachment is a bad thing. It's like having someone in the family put in jail."
>
> —*Ann Arbor News*, February 17.

There is a distinct force for activism in American society that is both volatile and pivotal. The word *radical* has many connotations, and orientation toward the Left is only one of them: its basic meaning is going to the root of the problem. From this central idea of action emerges the paradoxical reality of this decisive force—the Middle American Radical (MAR). His perspective does not fit readily the traditional molds of liberal or conservative ideologies. Moreover, MAR is a concept derived from considering ideology itself as a component in a person's response to the effect of institutions on the individual. As such, ideology becomes, for the purposes of this analysis, the basis for predicting patterns of social mobilization, not simply a means to determine the strength or coherence of social beliefs. Ideology, then, is a grouping of the elements by which people perceive problems and then choose to act or not to act on them.

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The Wallace movement, the anti-bussing "National Action Group" in Pontiac, open-housing protests in Milwaukee, the construction worker attacks on peace demonstrators in Manhattan a few years ago, along with such recent events as the truckers' protest during the "energy crisis," challenge the neat political stereotypes into which academics often try to fit people. Favorite explanations are that the working class is basically authoritarian, lacks cognitive skills, oversimplifies problems or is simply fascistic.

However, the Middle American Radical cannot be judged by these traditional political gauges. Studies in a series of communities and a national project funded by the Ford Foundation on the alienation of the blue-collar worker indicate that the MAR consistently sees an unholy alliance growing, at his expense, between the liberals and the minorities. White efforts to end racism have forced him to carry out good deeds, through his taxes, that he never felt compelled to institute. The burden falls on him to carry out the "social experiment," rather than on the affluent suburbanite or on the welfare poor. The Middle American Radical sees all levels of government—local to national—allied simultaneously with minority and idealistic groups against his own interests and social survival. Since he feels himself thus threatened, the MAR is an unpredictable force in American political life, an uneasy ally for either the Left or the Right. The reason is that MARs do not readily see their problems as caused by defects in institutional structure, but rather in character defects of individuals. Whether it be inflation, Watergate, neighborhood racial change or crime, many people in the Middle American strata advance highly individualized definitions of the situation. Even if the problem bears heavily on the MAR, it is often ascribed to human nature, to the inevitable failings of character, or simply to the unavoidable cycles of good and bad times. Anyone holding such views will find it hard to see how his participation in political action can effect change. What is of critical

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importance, however, is to understand that the MAR's failure to take political action stems from his two major belief systems. One is that action is useless because individuals in the institutions are powerless to change society. The other is that the alliances arrayed against the MAR are composed of people who possess defective character traits such as laziness, immorality or hedonistic life styles. MAR political action would not cure these defects. Thus, seeming inaction is not the apathy often deplored by the news media but the product of a considered analysis of American political life.

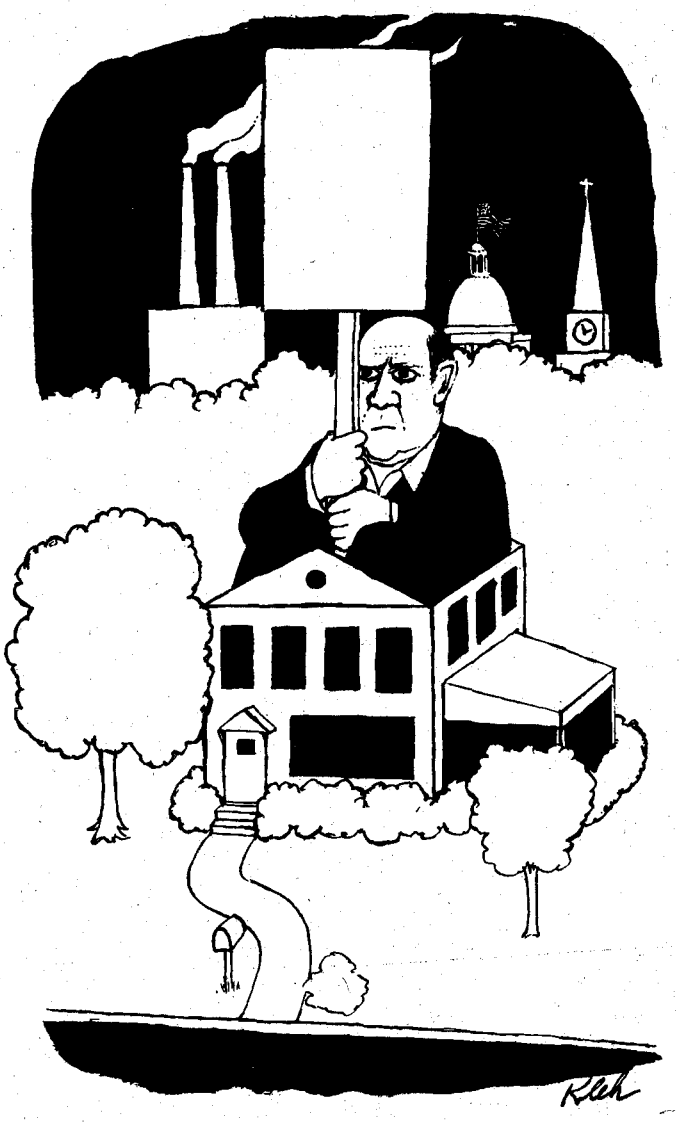
Who is the Middle American Radical? He is an individual whose belief system often cannot be predicted from his objective social position, but whose ideology may be found increasingly compatible with the reality of urban life as it is experienced by many people of traditional class cultures. He can also be a fairly affluent businessman who is frustrated by the regulations of a federal agency and who winds up at the same place in the Middle American perspective as an assembly-line worker disturbed by his union's policy toward minority hiring. Economically from the middle-income group ($11,000 to $15,000), he usually has a high school diploma but has seldom completed college. And with all respect to the increasing number of workingwomen who are demanding their equal rights, the MAR is usually male. He is also responsible for George Wallace.

Wallace talked about problems requiring universal solutions; that is, equity, equality and egalitarianism. Recently, many effective minorities have exerted their influence with the Establishment to bend its organizational rules and change its policies in order to reach their goals. MARs do not oppose comprehensive Establishment programs such as welfare, but they may turn against any that they deem inequitable, as by giving some people priority over others. The Middle American Radical has spent most of his life following the rules of union, church and government. He becomes upset when minority groups can achieve success equal to or greater than his by not adhering to or by changing the traditional rules.

Wallace also met his potential followers at the local level on issues that affected their daily lives. The MAR often has strong roots in neighborhood and community. McGovern, with his following of the poor, of affluent liberals, college students, blacks, Chicanos and anti-war dissidents, was the epitome of what the MAR resents on the American political scene. Furthermore, the neighborhoods and local communities were being neglected by both political parties. Hence, the rise of the Wallace movement seems directly related to the MAR's new sense of political awareness and new appreciation of how to make action influential.

Middle American Radicals, in short, have special complaints about the way government is run, but believe that many of the solutions must start and end in the actions of individuals, rather than by utilizing traditional channels of institutional participation. Areas in which MARs are most willing to take individual action turn out to be local government, the schools and neighborhood racial problems. Wallace's grass-roots political effectiveness validates studies which show that action must be linked to the neighborhoods and local communities if the MAR is to become involved.

Another governing factor is that the Middle American Radical does not tinker with basic institutional structures, however large or small these may be. Whereas the conventional radical is apt to see a need to reduce the scale of schools and government to make them more accessible, the MAR is concerned with the way such institutions are run and complains that individuals in high positions are not powerful enough to do their jobs properly. As he sees it, the failure of welfare agencies to diminish poverty, of police to decrease crime and of government to increase services, despite the ever-larger



amounts of the MAR's tax dollar that are spent on them, prove his point.

Middle American Radicals believe that formal organizations do not hold to clear-cut rules (perhaps because of rule-bending minorities) and are not responsive to MAR concerns (perhaps because the goals have been confused by both government and minority influence). However, they do not want these organizations to become smaller

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or to be restructured. Instead, they want new leaders who will institute and adhere to equitable rules directed toward realistic goals. Out of this desire stems the MAR's strong impulse to take some type of action.

What is central to an analysis of the MAR is the linkage of a given belief system or ideology with a set of social mechanisms that are consistent with it. The research work of myself and my colleagues supports the premise that many middle- and upper-level blue-collar and a substantial minority of white-collar workers in American society blame simultaneously the very rich, the poor and the minorities for their problems and that such a belief is from their point of view neither irrational, fascistic or an over-simplification of the political process.

The emergence of a multi-causal and multi-problem analysis by some segments of American society has historical roots and may be a product of those times when the ills of society seem to proliferate. It seems especially likely to appear during periods of relative affluence and of economic rather than social mobility. Essentially we are speaking about individuals who are no longer convinced that their attachments to traditional social classes and social institutions—such as unions and the church—assure them control over the direction of these structures. Their uneasiness generates pressures for social action, on one hand to restore such institutions to their proper functions and, on the other, to limit further eroding of these institutions by structural change.

Analysis of the belief system of the Middle American Radical helps to explain such enigmas as the cool reception Ralph Nader receives from the middle-income groups whom he so staunchly champions. The MAR cannot identify with Nader's elitist strategies. The meat boycott permitted individual action at the local neighborhood level; people could go to the market and express concern. But Ralph Nader operates at the level of centralized government, putting pressure on regulatory agencies of the federal government through a core of professionals and academics. It's a very different style and strategy of action —one that does not particularly respond to the consumer squeeze being felt by MARs in their neighborhoods.

Opposition to bussing schoolchildren to achieve racial balance is another example of how Middle American Radicalism works. While the affluent liberal picketed the schools, the Middle American Radical leaned toward boycotts. This permitted the individual act of keeping children home, but still resulted in a collective action. That is an important political force; even though the particular way in which this group is willing to become involved depends on its fundamental beliefs and on familiar forms of participation.

In the past, the Middle American Radical was amply represented by churches and labor unions. It is noteworthy that these institutions are very large scale and committed to universal rules and procedures. They tend to operate from the notion that there exists an important set of principles and that it applies to everyone. The MAR feels keenly the need to face the world from a highly structured position. However, as the traditional organizations and the world around them have changed, Middle American Radicals no longer look upon church and union as sufficient advocates. They now feel that they themselves —as individuals banding together—can be more effective and powerful. They want a style of protest that produces meaningful changes in the leadership and effectiveness of traditional institutions.

Surveys show a clear increase in independent voters and a decline in the committed party voter. The Middle American Radical phenomenon is part of that, and it may be a long-term pattern. One thing should be stressed: this group is much readier to participate than it used to be. People are really demanding more from public officials in terms of policy accountability and, unless government delivers, we can expect strong action. The success of the institutions is not going to depend on whether the most sophisticated experts are advising the leaders and coming up with correct solutions but on whether people out in the grass roots have some say in those solutions. MARs may not be radicals in the conventional sense, but from now on they will certainly express their demands for participation and recognition through action.

This action will not be directed toward the demolition of social or political institutions or traditions. The MAR places a high trust in such things. While many people believe impeachment would be a healthy, cleansing experience for the country, the MAR is not quick to agree. His reaction to the impeachment of the President is that it threatens the Presidency. A resignation might not be such a problem, as it would not alter the structure itself. (Neither would impeachment, but we are discussing how things are perceived.) MARs do not see structural change in the Presidency and in the interrelations of the branches of government as the critical issues of Watergate. They find in the Watergate mess character defects of individuals. The media support this belief system. As long as the press does not advocate change in the basic structures, but only asks for new, responsible leadership, the MAR will seek to take a hand in changing the leadership. Recent Congressional elections seem to support the belief system of the MAR.

During 1973 America saw numerous examples of situations in which the Middle American Radical mobilized for local and national protest. One instance was the rather effective "consumer revolt" meat boycott in April 1973. Using survey data analyzed from two Midwest blue-collar communities, we found that those most active in spreading the word and encouraging others to boycott markets were disproportionately people holding the Middle American Radical perspective. In the winter of 1973-74 came the truckers' protest; it was often violent, but it fits very well into the type of action with which the Middle American Radical can identify. It occurred in an industry that is highly decentralized, required very little local action to get under way, and only in the protest sense was it part of an "organizational effort." This was evident to the negotiators on the government side, who weren't sure that they were dealing with real representatives of the truckers or whether the Independent Truckers Association was in fact a genuine organization. In any case, the MAR is a real presence when it comes to protesting against ineffective leadership.

No wonder the labor union leadership, the academic

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liberal establishment, the New Left and even former energy czar William Simon have been unable to anticipate and respond to the frustrations and anger that is born of the self-interests of the MAR. Over the next few years no one will easily slip this group into his political pocket. Survey data in 1971-72, when we interviewed people before the Presidential primaries, indicated 30 per cent support for Nixon. That is roughly the same core the President holds today. What he was able to draw upon in the intervening period before Watergate and after the attack on George Wallace closely corresponds to the proportion of Middle American Radicals found in the national survey. The "mile wide and inch deep" support gained from this group has now been dissipated. Where their support and interests will next surface is not clear, but surface they will.

Middle American Radicals have an ideology that is independent of traditional political categories. They are not going to be easily or cheaply bought. After all, how can we facile manipulators of the traditional political imageries of Marx, Weber or Louis Harris grasp the reality of who are the "real Americans"? □

POST-FRANCO SPAIN

THE TENSION MOUNTS

PAUL PRESTON

The explosion that killed Admiral Carrero Blanco in Madrid on December 20, 1973 was the most successful act of violence against the Franco regime since its establishment in 1939. The problems it posed—of administrative continuity, of public order and general confidence—presented the regime with its greatest test. And it cannot be denied that the regime came through the crisis rather well. It was presumably satisfaction at this, rather than any of the more sinister meanings imputed to the remark, which inspired General Franco to say in his end-of-year message that "some good comes from every evil." Certainly the ease with which constitutional mechanisms functioned to replace the Admiral with the Vice President, Torcuato Fernández Miranda, and the absence of any major breach of order can be seen as the basis for official tributes to the "political maturity" of the Spanish people. With equal justification, the general serenity during the crisis also might have been attributed to the mass political indifference that is so carefully cultivated by the regime.

In fact, the crisis was not resolved quite as smoothly as official statements implied. Many in the Left were convinced that the assassination had been a rightist device to justify a purge of the opposition. After all, the Basque revolutionaries of ETA, who had accepted responsibility, had never operated outside their homeland before and the authorities had claimed to have broken them in a counterinsurgency offensive during the previous six months. Moreover, the terrorist actions which have disturbed the peace recently in Madrid have all been the work of the ultra-Right. Madrileños were also skeptical about the ease with which the complex preparations for the explosion were carried out in an area containing the U.S. Embassy and many official buildings. It was not surprising, then, that by the evening of December 20, the streets of Madrid were deserted as fear spread of mammoth reprisals.

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The main reason for this massive skepticism was the timing of the explosion. The bomb went off only fifteen minutes before the opening of the *proceso 1,001*, the trial of ten members of Workers' Commissions charged with illegal association. In a time of inflation and profits squeeze, the government has been trying to crush attempts to set up free trade unions and the *1,001* was a show trial to underline its determination in this respect. The assassination insured that the trial was conducted in an atmosphere of terror. The accused and their lawyers were threatened with lynching, but the judge refused defense pleas for an adjournment. Solidarity demonstrations planned for the day were called off. Sentences amounting to 162 years were handed down and the expected protests were kept to a minimum.

This coincidence and the fears of the Left did not preoccupy the government. It had to face the far more substantial possibility of a rightist backlash. Gen. Carlos Iniesta Cano, director-general of the Civil Guard, even seemed ready to attempt a coup. He ordered his local commanders to seize the provincial capitals and to shoot left-wingers at the first signs of demonstrations. The initiative of the more liberal Chief of the General Staff, Manuel Diaz Alegría, and Minister of the Interior Carlos Arias Navarro, prevented bloodshed. Iniesta was forced to rescind his telegram and placed under house arrest. Blas Piñar, leader of the ultra-Right, was ordered to keep his men off the streets. And the U.S. Ambassador and moderate opposition leaders were informed that the situation was under control. The activities of the neo-Fascists did not go beyond insulting behavior toward the Archbishop of Madrid at the Admiral's funeral.

Thus, the regime had demonstrated its control of both the Left and the Right, but the death of the Prime Minister was not a blow which could be lightly shrugged off. There are strong grounds for accepting the ETA communiqués as genuine. It seems inconceivable that that group, or any section of it, would accept responsibility for the assassination merely to act as scapegoat. And in fact the ETA's choice of target could hardly have been more deadly. The future of the regime after Franco was

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closely tied to Carrero Blanco. The ETA communiqué accepting responsibility showed that the Basques were aware of this: "Luis Carrero Blanco, a hard man, violent in his repressive attitudes, was the key which guaranteed the stability and continuity of the Franquista system. It is certain that without him the tensions within the government between the Falange and the Opus Dei will now intensify."

To a certain extent, this prediction has been proved correct. What for many years had been a quiet power struggle between the single party and the "*santa mafia*" became more open after the assassination. Carrero's presence had precluded a direct clash. On the one hand, he represented the survival of hard-line 1940s' Francoism —his first political assignment, in 1939, had been to attend the celebrations in Rome of the twentieth anniversary of fascism. But he had also sponsored the rise of the Opus, the secret religious organization dedicated to promoting Catholic principles by placing members at key posts in education, industry, banking and government. In the late 1950s, when the Falange's policies of autarchy had led Spain to bankruptcy, Carrero advised Franco to make Opus technocrats responsible for renovating the economy. Frustrated Falangists were pushed aside and the choicest posts in the ministries went to Opus men. The Admiral's death has allowed a measure of revenge and members of the *Obra* have been purged from the government and the bureaucracy. But the Opus still controls banks, factories and newspapers and is presumably as sympathetic as ever to the regime. It is extremely unlikely that it will fight back and paralyze the regime with the internecine conflict that ETA seems to have hoped for. Although now that Franco is no longer at the helm, squabbles can be expected among the ruling groups as they jockey for position.

Carrero Blanco's function within the regime went beyond that of holding the balance between competing forces. His cabinet, named last June after May Day clashes between police and workers, was something of a crisis government. Its principal task was to hold the country firm during the transition from Franco to Juan Carlos. The Caudillo at age 81 is ill at present, and has been forced to name the Prince as head of state. Juan Carlos lacks charisma and popular support. The loss of his main bulwark has only increased uncertainty about Juan Carlos' succession. This has been the greatest specific damage done to the regime by the assassination.

Juan Carlos' position has been in any case dubious. A widely circulated *Le Monde* article caused the Spanish authorities some discomfort. The author, the exiled monarchist and one-time Opus Dei theoretician, Rafael Calvo Serer, asserted that Juan Carlos could never unite all Spaniards around his throne because of his "original sin" of being Franco's nominee. A loud polemic ensued in which the Spanish press reaffirmed Juan Carlos' place as King.

Juan Carlos is not a man of ideas, but since *Le Monde*'s article, he seems to be moving closer to his father. Long one of Franco's fiercest critics, Don Juan favors a democratization of Spain. Yet even if Don Juan's influence were paramount, Juan Carlos would still face immense problems. The authority he inherited on July 19 has little substance, for it was Franco's personal authority, deriving from his role in the Civil War. Like most rightist dictators, he has left no enduring institutions. If Franco lives, his presence will inhibit the Prince and compromise him in the way suggested by Calvo Serer. Even with Franco gone, the Prince's possibilities are limited. An authentic liberalization must imply the vote for all and basic trade union rights. In the present economic crisis, these rights would be used by lower and middle classes to defend their living standards. That would imply some kind of redistribution of wealth, something the oligarchy could never tolerate.

This goes beyond Hispanic Kremlinology, for the questions raised are crucial to Spain's future. Carrero Blanco's death reopened options which seemed to have been closed by his appointment as Premier. Juan Carlos, backed by Carrero, could only have been an anti-democratic King. His throne would have been another symbol of the Nationalist victory in the Civil War. Calvo Serer's solution is for the Prince to renounce the throne and recall his father, who is thought to favor a democratic Spain.

In fact, it is most unlikely that either the democratic opposition or convinced Franquistas would accept Don Juan although some Social Democrats and other liberals have already held meetings with him in Portugal. What is really of importance here is the fact that the debate has been opened at all. Carrero Blanco seemed to assure the survival of inflexible Franquismo for another ten years. It was he who wrote in 1970, under the pseudonym Ginés de Buitrago, that to attempt to liberalize Spain was as reprehensible as to offer a reformed alcoholic a drink. While he ruled Spain, it is likely that state and society would have got even more out of step. One opposition critique has talked of beleaguered Francoism retreating into a bunker to fight modernization to the bitter end. It is in this context that his disappearance must be considered.

Under Carrero, the regime showed a continuing readiness to use violence against all forms of opposition. Student and industrial unrest has been met by police action. Dissident lawyers and priests have been attacked by neo-Fascists who have easily evaded detection. Yet Spain is a dynamic and demographically young country. As its economic and social development approach the levels of the Western democracies, so popular political aspirations grow. The maintenance of 1940s' solutions would have entailed progressively greater repression. But the post-Carrero government is not tied to a rigid style. As if to demonstrate this, Premier Arias Navarro's program, announced on February 12, had as its keynote a proclaimed determination to liberalize. One startled columnist reacted by asking rhetorically if this was "post-Franquismo in Franco's lifetime."

The government's sincerity regarding its liberal intentions will be most seriously tested by its attitude to the labor movement. Certainly liberalization would be in stark contrast to the regime's approach to labor questions in recent years.

Workers are now much better off than in the 1950s, but they still endure long hours, poor working conditions

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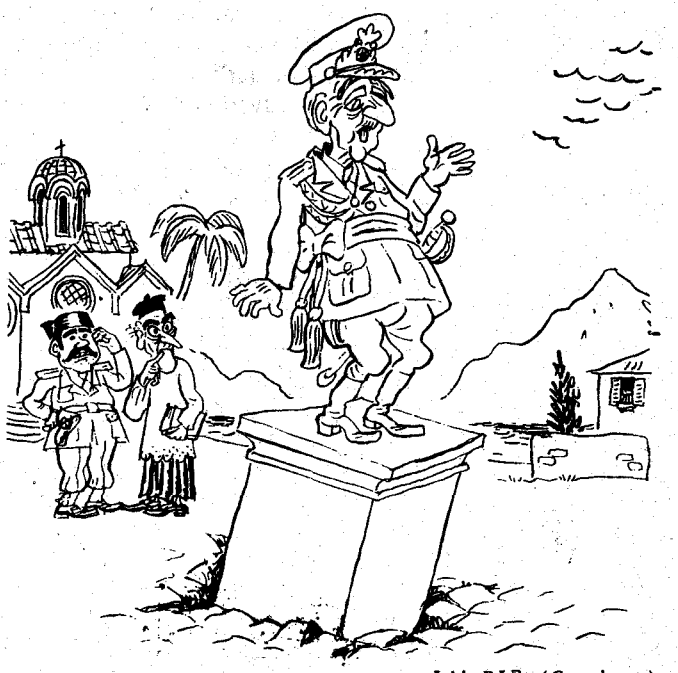

Juhl, P.I.B. (Copenhagen)

and a very high accident rate, for which minimal social, health and education services do little to compensate. Discontented and conscious of their strength as the country has industrialized, workers began to reject the farce of the vertical syndicates and to form Workers' Commissions—the beginnings of a representative union structure. In the mid-1960s, the commissions were half tolerated, but by 1969 their rising strength and a decline of the growth rate increased pressure for their suppression. In that year a state of emergency was declared; the honeymoon was over. Henceforth, commissions leaders faced arrest and imprisonment.

However, militancy and the days lost through strikes only increased. In Asturias, the mines were paralyzed during the winter of 1971-72. Three workers were shot in Granada (1970) and two in El Ferrol (1972) when major strikes were put down. The scope of strikes seems to be widening beyond the limited economic demands of specific groups. And it must be kept in mind that, from fear of the police, lack of strike pay and the possibility of dismissal, strikes are not undertaken lightly. After a year of minor economic boom and rampant inflation, the Carrero Blanco government took a series of "stabilizing" measures in November, including a freeze on wage increases over 15 per cent. Almost immediately, there were strikes in Asturias and the Basque iron foundries. The Catalan textile industry also had labor problems and there were major conflicts in normally quiet towns like Zaragoza, Valladolid and Alcoy.

The minimum legal salary is only 186 pesetas per day, and it has been calculated that a two-child family needs more than three times that to survive. Average wages oscillate between 12,000 and 18,000 pesetas per month, but many earn less. Many workers take two jobs or work long overtime to make ends meet. Uncontrolled inflation and frozen wages can only lead to greater intensification of social conflict.

The effect of inflation on the working classes was in some ways the greatest problem faced by the Carrero government, and there is little evidence that it was near a solution at the time of the assassination. Arias Navarro's cabinet has inherited the same problem, but with an enormous added complication—the energy crisis. Spain has been affected almost as badly as Italy. One of the prices paid for rapid economic development has been a gigantic increase in energy imports. In 1953, the value of imported combustible liquids was 351 million pesetas; in 1972, it was more than 63 billion. At the new price posted for Middle Eastern crude oil—which Spain must pay, despite its position as a friendly nation—it has been estimated that the 1974 energy bill could reach 200 billion pesetas. Alternative sources are limited. Asturian coal is of low quality and Spanish dependence on foreign energy supplies is as follows: natural gas 100 per cent, petroleum 96 per cent, uranium (for projected nuclear power development) 98 per cent. Spain's large gold reserves have helped cushion the crisis but they are already sinking fast. And its two main sources of income, tourism and remittances from emigrant workers, are badly affected by the European recession.

The assassination slowed down the previous rhythm of strikes for the briefest of intervals. In January, there were major conflicts in the shipyards of El Ferrol, the textile mills of Alcoy and Madrid municipal transport. On January 28, police clashed with workers who had downed tools in two Standard Electric factories in the capital. These and subsequent disputes make a significant backdrop to the government's claim that it contemplates a major liberalization. The sentences passed in the *1,001* trial show a determination not to tolerate an independent labor organization.

Also, as the spirit of the cold war fades, the U.S. presence is being questioned ever more persistently in Spain. A survey held in June of this year produced considerable hostility to U.S. bases. The overall results were 16 per cent in favor, 48 per cent against and 36 per cent don't-knows. It would fit well into the government's declared intentions of liberalization to make a propaganda point of breaking away from "American tutelage." Yet on this point, as on so many others, its freedom of maneuver is seriously limited by the economic situation. In need of all the sympathy available at the International Monetary Fund and in Washington as it tries to finance its oil deficit, Spain is in no position to snub the United States.

The composition of the present government indicates the solutions to be adopted to the problems emerging in the aftermath of the assassination and the energy crisis. President Carlos Arias Navarro was nominated by *La Vanguardia* of Barcelona as the hardest man in the previous cabinet. He was for a long time director-general of security under the hard-line Gen. Alonso Vega. During his six months as Minister of the Interior, major offensives were staged against several opposition groups: against ETA—nine militants shot in clashes with the police; against the Communists—several regional networks broken up; against the Workers' Commissions. The appointment of Carlos Arias and the cabinet he has chosen suggest that behind any liberalization there will be a mailed fist.

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The direction to be taken is already clear. While most of the developed world faces the present economic crisis with plans for strict stabilization, the Spanish Government has opted for untrammeled growth. Behind the decision taken at the March 1st cabinet meeting may be seen two motives. On the one hand is the continuing desire to press on and bring Spanish industry as near as possible to Common Market levels. The problem of liquidity, brought on by inflation and a reduction of consumption, could have a streamlining effect, purging many smaller enterprises which are a backward feature of the Spanish economy. In immediate terms, however, the decision meant accepting an increase in rates of inflation that are already running at more than 2 per cent per month—a possible annual 25 per cent. The increased energy costs have been passed on almost indiscriminately to the consumer—electricity has risen 15 per cent, petrol 70 per cent, transport 33 per cent, butane gas 60 per cent.

All this signifies a tremendous drop in the buying power of the working classes and a corresponding rise in militancy. There have been major conflicts in Alcoy and Zaragoza. Moreover, not only workers are involved. The owners of small fishing boats have been on strike against price rises. And the small-holders of Santander, Navarre, the Basque country, the Rioja and Burgos have taken part in a "milk war," withholding produce to enforce demands for higher prices. There have even been threats of a refusal to plant crops this year. For the moment, a blind eye is being turned to industrial settlements which contravene the wage freeze, but plans are being made by labor leaders for a major confrontation this autumn.

For all this, the government has gone to some trouble to acquire the liberal gloss which it may well need at a time of crisis. While it is unlikely that the proposed liberalization will reach the working class, efforts have been made to win over some sectors of the middle class. For instance, the new Minister of Education, Cruz Martínez Esteruelas, has attempted to remedy the chaos left in the universities by his predecessor. In recent months, censorship has become much milder under the Minister of Information and Tourism, Pio Cabanillas. Already some Christian Democrats and moderate Socialists have greeted the increased freedom with enthusiasm. Presumably to the government's satisfaction, the opposition is being split and a threat is being mounted to the Communist Party's policy of a broad democratic front, the *Pacto por la Libertad*. Yet the strength of this threat has been partly undermined by the Portuguese coup.

Spanish reaction to the new order in Portugal has been mixed, ranging from contempt on the extreme Right, to discretion on the part of the government, to euphoria on the Left. Lisbon is now the favorite weekend haunt of the Spanish opposition. De Spínola's *Portugal and the Future* has become a best-seller in Spain. The original reaction of the Left was to assume that what had happened in Portugal would necessarily happen in Spain. A cursory assessment of the colonial situation and its effects on the Portuguese armed forces immediately pointed up an obvious difference. Nevertheless, two main effects in Spain may be discerned already: on the part of the government, a strengthened resolve to modernize the Franquista system before it is too late (without, of course, giving away anything essential); and on the Left, a renewed belief in the need for a wide democratic coalition to step in when Franco dies. This latter is particularly apparent within the Communist Party, which has advocated such a coalition.

Nothing the government has done thus far represents far-reaching reform, nor could it in the present economic climate. Its function was simply to prepare the way for what has now happened—the retirement of the Caudillo. The death of Carrero symbolized the progressive disappearance of the old Civil War Franquistas but not of the social order they defended. The regime met the immediate crisis and then went on to seize the opportunity to modernize sufficiently to attract new blood and lose its more obviously authoritarian trappings. Accordingly, in the first days of his rule, Arias talked constantly of the need for participation, but also of his determination to maintain the strictest order. His February 12th program provided for the election—as opposed to government appointment—of mayors and senior local officials. Parliament will become about 35 per cent elective as against 17 per cent at present. The vertical syndicates will be given more bargaining power. Political associations, but not parties, will be permitted. Not a lot, but still the most liberal declaration ever made by a minister of Franco.

Its limits were laid down very clearly in a further speech made on June 15. The acceptance of differing political attitudes, said Premier Arias, would be limited to the context of the Movimiento—Spain's single party. The "spirit of February 12" lives, Arias declared, but it cannot be different from the permanent spirit of the regime. Only the day before, reports had circulated that Gen. Diaz Alegría had been removed as chief of staff because of his efforts to reduce the political role of the armed forces. Nothing could more clearly have underlined the strength of the hard-line Right within the Francoist establishment—an establishment with which Juan Carlos will have to work, at least in the coming months.

The Carabanchel Ten are still serving their 162 years. Despite an enormous international outcry, an anarchist, Salvador Puig Antich, was executed by *garrote vil* on March 2. And while pressure has eased on the moderate opposition, there has been a major offensive against Communists and the extreme Left. The contradictions of a "liberal" cabinet are becoming apparent. There were rumors in Madrid of protests from within the government against the execution of Puig and against the treatment given the Bishop of Bilbao, Monsignor Añoveros. On February 24, he issued a pastoral letter appealing for recognition of the cultural and linguistic identity of the Basque people and was accused of making subversive attacks on national unity. The execution of Puig and the treatment of Añoveros represent appeals to the ultra-Right and the forces of order. Herein lies the greatest contradiction: while the cabinet tries to carry out a limited modernization of the system, it remains closely tied to a security apparatus which guarantees that reform will not provoke major structural rifts. The most direct indication of this appeared in the declaration of the interim premier on the day of Carrero's death: "We may be prepared to forget the Civil War, but we will never forget our victory." □

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THE POLITICS OF FOOD

JENNIFER CROSS

How do you get people to understand that millions of Americans have adopted diets that will make them at best fat, at worst dead? That the $139 billion food industry has not only encouraged such unwise eating habits in the interest of profit but is so wasteful in many of its operations that we are inadvertently depriving hungry nations of food? That our agricultural policy is chauvinistic and short-sighted, primarily because the Agriculture Department, like most regulatory agencies, has been captured by business? That unless we can control inflation, stop playing politics with food and invest our money in people instead of corporations (especially those making unproductive weaponry), the world is probably headed for disaster?

These were the harsh issues underlying the mountain of testimony at the recent National Nutrition Policy Study in Washington, D.C. Few of them were met head-on, because they are a perfect example of a prevailing social dilemma. Well-motivated people suggest humane and necessary reforms, but these will not be carried out because they run counter to the interests of the power structure. However, changing the power structure is such a monumental job that people of good will bury themselves in displacement activities. Since they nevertheless still care deeply about social problems, they keep suggesting reforms, most of which end up gathering dust in the Library of Congress.

The National Nutrition Policy Study was a collection of several hundred doctors, dieticians, educators, food manufacturers, consumerists and faddists, who testified for three days before the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition & Human Needs. They were organized into six panels to deal with different aspects of the subject—consumer involvement, special (i.e., poor) groups, health, government, availability of food and the international situation. Together, these panels drew up a blueprint suggesting how America might best produce and distribute food in a world where people either do not have enough to eat, or are eating the wrong things.

One of the most disheartening conclusions was the extent to which inflation has brought the war against poverty-related hunger to a standstill. Since the 1969 White House Conference on Food, Nutrition & Health (*The Nation,* December 22, 1969) again brought poverty into the limelight, national spending for food programs has gone up about three and a half times, until they now reach 15 million people. Yet the special groups panel stated: "The 1970 Census listed nearly 26 million persons as living below the poverty line. Estimates of the number of persons eligible for family food programs ranged around 30 million until the beginning of 1974, and now range from 37 million to 50 million as the result of recent major increases in eligibility limits." Meanwhile, food prices have gone up 30 per cent in the last two years, forcing millions below the poverty line, and millions more of the marginally poor to tighten their belts.

Overseas, the situation is still more bleak. World population continues to outstrip the food supply—each year the human race grows by 2 per cent, but eats 3.1 per cent more grain. We are increasingly at the mercy of droughts and poor harvests (as happened in 1972) and the kind of climatic changes now being experienced in the Sahara. The world is running short of fertilizer, agricultural land and water. We have scoured the seas, and the anchovies have fled.

Problems of scarcity are being compounded by the rising demand for food in fat-cat nations. And inflation, which hurts everyone, is pricing food beyond the reach of the world's poor. In addition to periodic local famines, we are now seeing what economist Lester Brown calls "a silent crisis of malnutrition," which "may be denying 1 billion human beings their basic right to realize the physical and mental potential of their genes." The differences in food intake between rich and poor nations is striking. The average American consumes nearly a ton of grain a year (mostly in the form of meat, milk and eggs); the average Indian gets only 400 pounds of grain a year, mostly consumed as cereals.

At the Indian level, tightening your belt means starvation. Even in America, where "poor folks' food" like beans and rice have gone up in price disproportionately, many families are being reduced to such fare as pet food, stale coffee and chocolate bars; or they face a bare cupboard at the end of each month, when the food stamps run out. Not surprisingly, the health problems of underfed Americans are exacerbated by inadequate or nonexistent medical care.

Not that prosperous Americans are in any great shape. Many of them overeat, and at least 40 per cent of them are overweight. They also eat the wrong foods—too much meat, eggs, fat (especially saturated fat), salt, sugar, coffee and alcohol. Add to this mixture stress and lack of exercise, and the result is an epidemic of diet-related diseases, not only here but in many other fat-cat countries. As the (predominantly medical) panel on nutrition and health services pointed out, 25 million Americans have high blood pressure, which can lead to coronary heart disease, our number-one killer (38 per cent). Diabetes mellitus and gallstones, both associated with obesity, are on the rampage; so are dental problems. And 15 million Americans have a drinking problem bad enough either to endanger their livers (if they don't eat properly) or to make them fat (if they do).

One reason for unwise eating is that people increasingly prefer snacking to three square meals, and fewer women prepare food from scratch—hence they buy more processed, snack and "fast" foods. It does not take a dietician to realize how many of these are fatty, salty, clog the arteries and embellish the waistline. Unfortunately they are also found to be delicious to the point

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of being addictive; coffee, sugar and alcohol are quite literally so.

Last year the food, beverage and grocery products industries spent $2.9 billion on media advertising (nearly half of it on TV, where one out of every five commercials is for food or drink), plus another $3 billion on coupons and other promotions. As usual, about half of this was for inedible items, or for foods empty of nourishment—beer, liquor, coffee, soft drinks, snacks, candy and cold breakfast cereals. A good deal of the money was invested in advertising foods seductive to children.

As the consumer panel pointed out, "The economic interests of advertisers put advertising support behind high-profit, highly processed foods which are not necessarily nutritious, instead of the unprocessed, healthful foods." The result is a vicious but tasty cycle. We like seductive foods, they are more profitable to market, so that's what we eat, and what we see on TV. And since it's impossible to embody a nutritional message in ads for soft drinks, chips, beer or candy bars without raising a laugh or an FTC lawsuit, the nutrition education provided by TV is practically nil.

It hasn't been much better elsewhere, because nutrition education is still considered Mommy's business, and chances are that she teaches about nutrition no better than she teaches about sex. Few children learn much in school home economics courses, and what little they do is quickly countered by TV and the omnipresent vending machine. Students rarely learn more at college, or medical school for that matter, unless they specialize in home economics or dietetics. Small wonder we have been called "a nation of nutritional illiterates."

Despite many pleas at the 1969 White House conference for improved nutrition education, there has been real progress in only two directions: the Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program of the Agricultural Education Service, which caters to poor families; and the nutrition labeling of food products that make health claims, which will be required by the Food & Drug Administration on packaged foods after January 1975.

A third change, too new to be confidently called "progress," is the tremendous resurgence of interest in health foods. Thousands of Americans, many of them young, claim to have seen God in Crunchy Granola, yoghurt and mu tea—but pay inflated prices for produce which may or may not be "organic," and for vitamin and mineral supplements which may or may not be needed. Perhaps half the gospel of food is misinformed; the other half is ahead of its time. No one quite knows which is which.

What would it take to revolutionize the country's food habits? The Nutrition Study made the usual sensible suggestions: a special federal department of nutrition (modeled perhaps on the Council of Intergovernmental Relations), linked to a national network of community nutrition centers; plus much more research on how much of what food is eaten by whom. We need better, more appealing nutrition education at all levels, beginning with preschool. Similarly, education should be included in all government food programs and health care services. We also need to be sure of what we are eating: the consumer panel made a strong case for more nutrition information on food packages, open dating, unit pricing and a better system of grading for quality. Finally, *all* Americans need the guarantee of a good diet, which would ideally follow from more job opportunities or a guaranteed annual income, but at least from an improved and expanded food-stamp program.

Unfortunately, most of these recommendations have been kicked around, in some form, since the 1930s. Meanwhile, business as usual keeps rolling along. On the same day that doctors on the Nutrition Study emphasized that we should eat less meat, U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Earl Butz instructed American housewives that buying more meat was their patriotic duty. While the study produced figures showing that meat production was a costly and inefficient way to use world grain resources, Congress hastily debated a bill which would bail out the overstocked cattlemen once again with government loans, and Butz—though school was just out—announced bulk-meat purchases for the school lunch program. As the consumer panel bravely recommended that food advertising on children's TV be banned, or at least restricted, Marian Burros, a panel member, reported on NBC-TV that the Federal Trade Commission, which had been working for months on a children's TV advertising code, had been so intimidated by the food industry's objections that it hadn't even dared to publish its preliminary proposals.

Well-intentioned as the Nutrition Study is, it does not come to terms with the politics of its concern. How do you get a top-level nutrition department when the present Administration is not interested either in nutrition or in tacking another layer onto government bureaucracy? And even if you got one, what assurance would there be that it would not go the way of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the FTC and the Food and Drug Administration—which is to say, either captured by big business, or cowed into varying degrees of inactivity? How can the poor hope for more than token help, when the Administration spends $100 billion a year on defense and openly subsidizes big business, yet would veto expensive anti-poverty programs on the ground that they fan the inflation? How can people be persuaded to eat less meat, when the cattlemen's lobby has enough political clout to defy the laws of supply and demand?

What can improved nutrition education accomplish without corresponding changes in food marketing practice and industry structure? For one thing, education is terribly slow, and the world is running out of time. Furthermore, education may not work. As a Nutrition Study witness said, you can spend $1,000 and devote a whole year to educating a low-income mother on how to feed an obese, anemic baby, and the odds are 1 to 10 that the lesson will stick.

The fact is that the needed changes are fundamental, starting with the President, continuing with reform of campaign spending (to eliminate "milk money"), income tax reform (so that giant corporations pay more of their fair share), trimming the defense budget, freeing the airwaves from the control of big business, and including the recognition that there is something wicked

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about socialism for the rich and a dole for the poor. A competent, interested Congress would be nice, too—a body more suitable for a bicentennial than Mark Twain's "grand old asylum for the incompetent."

It is easier to go on publishing more nutrition studies than to grapple with basic political force. But consumers do themselves an injustice if they fail to use what money and power they do have, while recognizing that they are not yet a match for the political and economic establishment. For a start, they could adjust the balance of power somewhat in their favor by pressing for the Consumer Protection Act of 1974, which would set up a Cabinet-level department of consumer affairs. They could encourage (or kick) the FTC into issuing a *strong* code on TV food advertising, starting with children's programs.

Citizens should also recognize the connection between big business, big advertising, monopoly and waste. It has been amply documented that the food and agricultural industries have been taken over by large, monopolistic or oligopolistic corporations. They are politically powerful, but they are not necessarily efficient, since they indulge in wasteful nonprice competition and price-fixing. They are also slaves to the ideas of growth and profit.

Putting more teeth into existing federal agencies and laws already on the books could turn the tide in favor of the medium-small corporation and farm. The use of farming and cattle feeding for tax-loss purposes should be discouraged, and price-fixing arrangements (starting with milk) should be eliminated.

Meanwhile, civic-minded groups could work out with the food industry ways of putting more profit into marketing nutritious foods without pricing them out of consumers' reach. A degraded transportation system is slowing down the movement of perishable produce. Grocery store margins might be altered to promote the sale of more nutritious foods. What would happen if stores devoted better display space, say, to milk rather than to soda pop, to fresh produce instead of potato chips? If the good foods still didn't sell, we could at least (judiciously) enrich the junk.

Sooner or later, the politics and economics of scarcity will force changes in our eating habits. Food is becoming scarcer worldwide, and as we learned from the Russian wheat deal, America is in competition with fat-cat countries, and will have to expect rising agricultural prices. Against this setting, the American way of eating is an irresponsible luxury. And the agricultural revolution is running out of steam in this country. As Dr. Jean Mayer, the Nutrition Study coordinator, said: "We are on the diminishing returns part of the curve in the relationship of production to fertilizer. The same million tons of fertilizer which would produce 22 million tons of grain in India will only produce 11 million tons here. It is going to cost $750 million, according to the best estimates, to produce the same amount of grain and ship it to India . . . three times the $250 million it would cost to produce the fertilizer and send it to India."

The food industry consumes *huge* amounts of energy, all the way from heavily mechanized farms to elaborate processing and packaging and ending with the customer, who *drives* to and from the local supermarket several times a week. We spend $20 billion a year on packaging materials, and these are also getting scarce and expensive. Sooner or later we may have to give up many processed foods—and eat less meat—because they have been priced out of reach.

Despite rising costs, America (and other developed countries) have a responsibility to provide more aid than casual handouts under PL 480. Sen. George McGovern outlined a "Ploughshares for Peace" policy—including larger world grain reserves, more agricultural research, and more aid to help developing countries grow more food for themselves. All these are suggestions that America will probably make at the FAO world food conference in Rome this September.

Right there one runs into the politics of population control, which is so horrendously difficult to accomplish that diplomats prefer to exchange money, missiles and trade agreements rather than take a hard line with obstinately fertile nations. We shall have to change or even reverse Earl Butz's policy of "produce, produce, produce, sell, sell, sell," since developing countries can less afford to buy, and American food reserves have hit a twenty-year low. Yet discussion of reserves is unpopular in the Corn Belt, which fears the effect on domestic prices if these are suddenly dumped on the market. The country must do a better job of regulating its international trade—which has produced not only the infamous grain deal but recent horrendous swings in grain and meat supplies and prices—all brought about by lack of planning. Planning, too, is a dirty word down on the farm, and among food manufacturers and exporters. Yet "business as usual" allows farmers to boil baby chicks and slaughter pregnant cows to keep prices up. It allows exporters to make (reputedly) outsize profits, and even to "corner" the soybean market, as in 1973. It also permits big governments to wheel and deal in scarce commodities, and (as Earl Butz recently did in Canada) threaten and blackmail one another to protect their own producers.

The road is not going to be easy. Very profound changes must occur in the basic political and economic systems, not to mention the eating habits of whole nations. Are we going to *plan* these changes, and for the dislocation that will follow, or will we let time and accident decide?

At least the Nutrition Study has opened up the country's whole agricultural policy for public comment, and focused renewed attention on nutrition. It may influence some pending legislation, for example Sen. Hubert Humphrey's S. R. 329, which calls for more aid to developing countries (and correspondingly bigger agricultural reserves); Sen. Richard Schweiker's bill for medical education; the Kennedy-Mills health insurance proposals: and Sen. Charles Percy's food and nutrition bills —all of which could usefully embody some provisions for nutrition education. To do much more would probably take a revolution. Instead, we will very likely continue to spend more on government food programs for the disadvantaged.

As I bade farewell to Dr. Jean Mayer on the steps of the Senate Office Building, I said, as cheerfully as I could, "See you in five years, Doctor!" He gave me a Gallic smile. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

Mishima's Still Garden: A Place of No Memories

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF YUKIO MISHIMA. *By Henry Scott-Stokes. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 344 pp. $10.*

GORDON GRAHAM DOWLING

The familiar portrait of Yukio Mishima among Western readers today is of a first-rate artist whose life, warped by twisted and conflicting drives toward sex, death, beauty, glory and power, and "torn between two worlds," the old Japan and the modern West, led him to a destructive, bizarre and feudally "barbaric" death. But can we accept this all too conventional view?

A very few years ago Mishima was scarcely known in this country, being regarded as but one of a half-dozen contemporary Japanese novelists of some merit, among them Kobo Abé, Kafu Nagai, Junichiro Tanizaki, Yasunari Kawabata and Kenzaburo Oe. Ironically, the novel which established Mishima's literary reputation in the English-speaking world was *The Sound of Waves*, perhaps the most unrepresentative of all his works and, although a best seller in Japan, a book about which he and critics expressed serious doubts. It is interesting to note that only three months before his death, *The New York Times Magazine* could still print a cover story subtitled: "You've Heard of Yukio Mishima . . .? Everyone in Japan Has." Today, Mishima undoubtedly has become the best known of Japan's modern authors. This transformation may be attributed in part to the fact that Mishima's style is more easily adaptable into English than that of most Japanese writers, and that there is an enormous body of work from which to select potential novels, plays and essays for translation. But the main rise of his fame and notoriety not only coincided with, but sprang directly from, his rather ghastly *seppuku*, the first since World War II, an act which titillated the imaginations of many, and shocked the complacent liberalism of the literary establishment. Speculation regarding the motivations underlying the Mishima suicide began immediately, and ranged from Faubion Bowers' tendentious article, "A Memory of Mishima," published by *The Village Voice* on December 3, 1970, intimating that Yukio Mishima had died as a result of his impotence and resultant homosexual frustrations, through the more moderate and reasoned explanations offered by such scholars as Donald Keene, to the vehement opinion of the *Peking Review* that the "Mishima incident" had been staged with the connivance of the Sato government in order to accelerate the revival of Japanese militarism. Some labeled Mishima insane, others believed that he had exhausted his talents as a writer. For some time many, especially those on both the extreme Left and Right who wished to exploit Mishima's suicide for their own purposes, simplistically declared that his action had been politically motivated. Still others considered Mishima's death a necessary extension of his own aesthetic. Most responsible scholars insisted that no one such explanation contained the entire truth, but that a combination of some of these, together with many other elements of his life, prompted the novelist to act as he did.

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More than thirty biographies of Yukio Mishima have already appeared in Japan. Now Henry Scott-Stokes, Tokyo bureau chief for *The Times* of London in the late 1960s and a friend of Mishima's during that period, has presented us with the first biography to appear in the West, as well as new and startling speculation concerning Mishima's *seppuku*. Yet another biography of this figure, first submitted as a Harvard dissertation, is due to be published by Little, Brown in the fall, this one by John Nathan, who is now at Princeton University, translator of *The Sailor Who Fell from Grace with the Sea*, and a man who has made a special study of Mishima's development in the early 1960s. Meanwhile, let us consider Scott-Stokes' book, one which has been widely referred to as a psychobiography, but which does not completely fit that genre. We are of course exposed to Mishima's early upbringing, dominated by the oppressive influence of his sick grandmother, his homosexual tendencies and possible homosexual relationships, his narcissism and exhibitionism, his lifelong obsession with St. Sebastian, his compulsions, his role as a poseur and his continual preoccupation with the theme of "Death and Night and Blood." Fortunately, however, Scott-Stokes has directed his inquiry to Mishima's personal aesthetic rather than to psychological conjecture or the political views of the Japanese author.

Nor has Scott-Stokes aimed his examination primarily at Mishima the artist, or at a critique of his works. Here he is entirely justified. There will be room for such studies in the future, and Mishima was not, by any standard, the greatest of Japan's modern writers, nor was he actually a first-rate novelist. In fact, from a literary standpoint, his plays were probably of a higher caliber than his novels. His brilliant last work, *The Sea of Fertility* tetralogy, stands, of course, in direct opposition to these statements, both as a saga of the external and internal decay and disintegration of traditional values and culture, and as the more limited story of Japan's emergence into a meaningless world. Yet from an overall perspective, Tanizaki, Kawabata and even Dazai undoubtedly surpassed Mishima as artists. Scott-Stokes realizes that the key to Mishima's aesthetic, and thus to his death, lies in the man, and to a lesser extent in the myth and the art. For Mishima presents us with so enigmatic a figure, not only because of the Yeatsian fusion of the classic and the romantic in his life and writings but because this was at all times combined with a peculiarly personal and decadent eroticism.

The Life and Death of Yukio Mishima is a well-researched and uninflamed portrayal of Mishima's life and survey of his writings, a mixture of biography and personal anecdote. It is this latter which furnishes the reader with a particularly appealing glimpse of the human side of Mishima's character. The combination of objective and subjective, often fatal to the biographical form, succeeds here exceptionally well. Scott-Stokes' is a provoking and intriguing book which no one interested in the Mishima controversy should fail to read. Perhaps most exciting and intense is the author's narration of the plots and events immediately preceding Mishima's suicide, as well as the actual story of what happened on the day of his *seppuku*, for whereas much of the other material might already be known to an informed reader, the report of these activities has never before been fully divulged in English, and has been until now largely ignored—after the immediate sensationalist journalism had

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gradually disappeared from the news media.

Yet one cannot escape the conclusion that Scott-Stokes is more concerned with the death of Yukio Mishima than with his life. The author describes the major hypotheses formulated about Mishima's *seppuku*, and offers a quite fair and unbiased opinion of the plausible factors inherent in each theory. He leans heavily toward the view that Mishima's suicide represented "a gorgeous mosaic of homosexuality, *Yomeigaku* and Emperor worship," and then states that, although Mishima's whole life drew him toward suicide, the actual catalyst was a *shinju*, a traditional Japanese double love suicide, in this case of a homosexual nature, involving Masakatsu Morita, Mishima's second in command of the Tatenokai, who also died with him in the rite of *kappuku* and *kaishaku*. This extreme conclusion, Scott-Stokes freely admits, is based solely upon the conjecture of two Japanese friends. Although there was an erotic element in Mishima's death, as in his life, and although Mishima's relationship with Morita and the other members of his Society of the Shield will probably never be known, a more persuasive case would be required to convince the reader of the credibility of Scott-Stokes' argument. The element of Emperor worship also requires clarification. Mishima's Emperor worship was fixed neither upon the present Emperor, whom he frequently subjected to public criticism in his essays, nor on the Emperor system itself but rather upon the *kokutai* (national essence), a term now relatively antiquated in Japan, which he saw—as did his heroes of the "2/26 Incident" of 1936, whose failure brought on expansion into China and ultimately the Pacific war—as preserved through time by the sanctity of the Emperor's immortality.

Yomeigaku is a subject at the same time more subtle and more complex. This neo-Confucian philosophy of action, which Scott-Stokes correctly describes as "dilettante," and to which Mishima turned in the last years of his life, furnished him not so much with a new philosophical center as with a peculiarly Japanese framework in which his earlier aesthetic, that which he had been developing throughout his life, could find justification. Within this framework—his yearning for a young, beautiful and pure death and for the universally heroic and tragic; the influence of archaic, Hellenic ideals of honor and glory, *to philotimo*; his attraction to the epic view of history, the fierce intensity of his life; his dedication to the struggle against realism and mediocrity which he saw destroying more and more, day by day, all that he knew and cared for; his craving for the absolute; his desire to go from the symbol to the thing symbolized; his disgust with the sterility of the life of the intellect alone; and above all his search for a truth deeper than the truth of ideas—all were able to find a place and a meaning, perhaps naive, in his own cultural context, through the vehicle of *yomeigaku*. Thus *yomeigaku* was to Mishima more an outlet for his own half-formed concepts and aspirations than a philosophical abstraction.

It becomes increasingly clear how such a man could ultimately find his idea of salvation only in death, especially when seen in the perspective of the crisis of meaning in Japanese culture. That culture, as seen in *The Sea of Fertility*, has become sterile, cut off from its own traditions, and being in effect without a past, can justify itself only in the present and the future, a challenge to which the Japanese, in Mishima's view, have failed to respond. This larger crisis, spiritual emptiness in an era of rapid change, the essence of the dilemma of the modern Japanese intellectual, which has been obscured here by the smaller issue of Mishima's life and death, has driven many of the great Japanese writers of this century to suicide—Bizan Kawakami, Takeo Arishima, Ryunosuke Akutagawa, Shinichi Makino, Osamu Dazai, Tamiki Hara, Michio Kato, Sakae Kubo, Ashihei Hino and Yasunari Kawabata—and others to alienation, despair, disillusionment or insanity. In such a context, Mishima was drawn to the images of death, seeing in each of them the ultimate merger of the ephemeral with the eternal, and in each, especially when one controls the manner of one's death, a victory over man's fate, a transcendence over the finite character of human existence. To Mishima, who had lived his entire life "on the brink of eternity," it was to be such a death that would provide the ultimate truth, fusing myth and ritual, word and action, transitory individuality with the epic and with ageless tradition.

But to what purpose? The results of Mishima's death, the effects upon Japanese consciousness and politics which his action has provoked, are well known, but Mishima's motives will no doubt remain elusive, and the speculation and theorizing will probably continue indefinitely. Perhaps, in his flagrant romanticism and naïveté, and in his love of the dramatic, Mishima was attempting to demonstrate that the possibility for individual salvation is still open in our materially oriented era, that although man is trapped by the human condition, by his inability to free himself from nature, his triumph and his immortality still lie in his choice of the heroic action.

But among all the supposition and interpretation, who can possibly know what thoughts moved this singular man? Mishima's riddle is compounded by the extraordinary number of masks behind which he hid his true self. He was in fact a shy, sensitive and vulnerable person. The product of a sheltered life, he had been inculcated at an early age with a now useless code of aristocratic values and an archaic aesthetic. Might not the

THE DREAM IN THE SNOW

Outside my window the intricate
snow of my childhood blooms again,
first snow, motionless kingdom of

branches black and white, ice and light . . .
And last night in my dream
you too appeared again,

though God knows you have now
been dead two years, two years
beneath the molding snow,

but there you were, again, intolerant
of my life. You left,
I said. You stood in the doorway.

Tears drifted across my cheeks like snowflakes,
melting, freezing, freezing, melting—
your face or mine? I wasn't sure.

But it wasn't over, *you said.*
Nothing will ever
be over.

Sandra M. Gilbert

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literary failure of *Kyoko's House* have enticed him toward his "still garden," his "place of no memories"? Might not the collapse of both his old classicism and of the pseudo-Nietzschean beliefs which inspired *Sun and Steel* have caused him to commit *seppuku*? Could these elements have led him to seek in death a solution to the cosmic nihilism and loneliness which permeate *The Sea of Fertility*, and appear so strikingly in the final scenes of *The Decay of the Angel*? For surely we must take this to be Mishima's last comment on life and fate. There is ample evidence that Mishima had already sounded out the Self-Defense Forces; he was well aware of the reception that he could expect at their hands. With all hope and love gone, could Mishima's remaining wish, like that of the hero of Camus' *The Stranger*, have been that on the day of his death—for his existence to retain even a fragmentary dignity, for his principles to be vindicated and for his loneliness to be somewhat assuaged—"there should be a huge crowd of spectators" and that they should greet his act "with howls of execration"? That was precisely the greeting Mishima received from the soldiers assembled below as he stepped out onto that balcony almost four years ago. It is the reception he has suffered from most of us ever since. For all his faults and weaknesses, and whatever his motives, it seems unfortunate that Yukio Mishima has been all but abandoned to the impassioned judgment of the crowd. □

The Vergil and Baudelaire of Our Tongue

THE FALL OF CAMELOT: A Study of Tennyson's Idylls of the King. *By John D. Rosenberg. Belknap Press of Harvard University. 144 pp. $6.95.*

JUDY PREWITT BROWN

T.S. Eliot said that when he began to write he found few English authors who could suggest to him how to handle the language in order to represent modern experience; he turned instead, he claimed, to the French Symbolists for crucial examples of modern technique. In what may come to be viewed as the most scandalous literary rejection of his generation, Eliot ignored his indebtedness to Tennyson, and in so doing helped to solidify the critical orthodoxy that for the past fifty years has obscured our perception of Victorian poetry in general and Tennyson in particular. John Rosenberg brilliantly refutes this tradition in *The Fall of Camelot: A Study of Tennyson's "Idylls of the King,"* a landmark work in Tennyson scholarship.

According to the modernist myth, Rosenberg explains, English poetry reached a dead end with the Victorians: "The reader is rushed directly from Keats to Yeats to Eliot, with no stops on the way save for Gerard Manley Hopkins, who, Leavis contends, bears 'no relation . . . to any nineteenth century poet.'" The trouble with this literary map is that it by-passes a major English poet and poetic work, the *Idylls of the King*, "one of the four or five indisputably great long poems in our language." The road leading back to Camelot, Rosenberg contends, "passes through Byzantium and Eliot's *The Wasteland*." Tennyson was a symbolist a half-century before the Symbolist movement achieved celebrity.

To illustrate his point about Eliot, Rosenberg offers two scarcely distinguishable passages from the two poets, but the book itself testifies at length to the connection. The *Idylls of the King* is a symbolist masterpiece and Rosenberg's work is itself a masterpiece of symbolist analysis. Compressed and dazzlingly sustained, the volume covers the evolution of the *Idylls* from their beginnings in Tennyson's early work to the massive conception of the entire poem. In the final chapter, Rosenberg seems to enclose the poem in mirrors to reveal its own sense of participation in the endless reflection of Arthurian legend: "The *Idylls* . . . is itself a kind of literary second coming of Arthur, a resurrection in Victorian England of the long sequence of Arthuriads extending back before Malory and forward through Spenser, Dryden, Scott, and Tennyson."

In his essay on Swinburne, Rosenberg had once before succeeded in releasing the reader from the bondage of a critical mythology, and re-educated and refreshed his poetic sensitivity; similarly, the opening chapter of *The Fall of Camelot* dispels the mists of prejudice that have hindered our appreciation of Tennyson's poetry. He lays to rest the modern bias, dating back to the Victorians themselves, that dictates that a poem set in the past must be dishonestly evasive:

> The dreams of Goya are more real than the hard pictorial surfaces of Andrew Wyeth, and the odds are that the painter of an automobile junkyard is more of an escapist, because less of an artist, than Blake painting the mythical Urizen. For "escapism" and "realism" in their profoundest meanings are not functions of time and place but of intensity of imaginative vision. No prima facie case can be made against the remoteness of King Arthur that cannot also be made against his colleague and neighbor, King Lear. Shakespeare turned from the Elizabethan marketplace to the blasted heaths of ancient Britain, and in so doing created a Waste Land at least as contemporary as T.S. Eliot's or as Tennyson's blighted land of sand and thorns in "The Holy Grail," from which Eliot's in part derives.

In the intermediary chapters of textual analysis entitled "Timescape" and "Landscape," Rosenberg shows that Tennyson has created a new genre that is "at once epic and lyric, narrative and drama, tragedy and romance." In "Timescape" he shows how in reading the *Idylls* our habitual notions of time undergo progressive disorientation: "As the founding recedes further and further into the past, we become more and more conscious of it in a continuous present, so that Camelot is still being built in our mind's eye as it goes up in flames, just as those flames were present in our imagination even as the city was being built. In some ultimate sense that only the experience of the poem can convey, nothing ever happens only once and everything that happens, happens simultaneously with its opposite." Just as he blurs the boundaries between past, present and future, Tennyson blurs the distinction between character and setting. There are no "descriptive backgrounds" in the *Idylls*; its landscape is the landscape of the mind. "In essence the narrative is a sequence of symbols protracted in time, the symbolism a kind of condensed narration."

Building upon the insights of other scholars, particularly those of his teacher Jerome Buckley, Rosenberg's analysis of the moral ambiguities of the *Idylls* will, I hope, finally put an end to the myth of Tennyson as a Poet in Spite of Himself who, in the words of Cleanth Brooks, on occasion *blundered* into ambiguity. "The subtlest anatomy of the failure of ideality in our literature," the *Idylls* offers an apocalyptic prevision of the nightmare of modern history. And the moral questions it raises are hardly confined to a didactic dualism between spirit and passion, sense and soul. "The *Idylls* dramatizes on all levels the only conflict that can engage the mature moral imagination —the clash not of right versus wrong but of right versus right. . . . [The] moral of the *Idylls* is not that men must abide

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by spiritual values, any more than the moral of Othello is that wives should look to their linen. In this sense, the poem is totally without a moral but explores instead the ambiguous results of man's quest for such values, and the disastrous effects of abandoning them."

Rosenberg's perception of Arthur's place in the *Idylls* is especially enlightening. Patterned upon the paradoxical nature of Christ, "at any moment [Arthur] is in double jeopardy of becoming either too 'real' or too 'remote.'" To many readers, the king's final words to Guinevere border on priggishness; yet after reading *The Fall of Camelot*, the scene becomes more ambivalent. Throughout the *Idylls* our attention is fixed by Guinevere's dignity and stimulated by her proud sensuality, as it is by Lancelot's troubled humanity. In their "great and guilty" love we are asked to see not the triumph of evil in the world but, through Arthur, the failure of goodness. □

That Old Cup of Forbearance

TO CONQUER A PEACE: The War Between the United States and Mexico. *By John Edward Weems. Doubleday. 500 pp. $12.50.*

ROBERT SHERRILL

Since the death of Walter Prescott Webb, no first-rank historian and biographer has stepped in to deal with Southwestern history in the lively fashion that it deserves. But in recent years John Edward Weems has shown promising signs of being the man to fill Webb's shoes, first with *Dream of Empire* in 1971, an account of life in Texas during the ten years that Texas was an independent republic, and now with *To Conquer a Peace*, a history of the war between the United States and Mexico. This is the work of a master historian.

After coming at you with that bubbling optimism, let me back up hastily to add that New York publishers, characteristically preoccupied with such momentous questions as the probable publishing date for the latest sex report, do not seem to share my enthusiasm. Although Weems has for at least a decade been recognized by scholars and a faithful band of lay readers as a marvelous and authoritative writer on polar explorations (*Race for the Pole* and *Peary: The Explorer and the Man*), his publishers have generally supported his books with about as much advertising and puffery as they would give manuals on how to dig post holes. Never mind. At least we've got Weems the historian out of the snowdrifts and back in cactus country, where he was born and reared and educated, and where he belongs.

If history is supposed to provide lessons, as we are constantly being told, no international conflict has more lessons of immediate applicability than this one. And what is the central lesson?—that when it comes to political hypocrisy, nothing ever changes.

In President Polk, who presided over the shabbiness, we see a very contemporary American President. He was determined to incite a war with Mexico so that we could expand our territory, not only by annexing the new Republic of Texas but by seizing the New Mexico, Arizona and California territory. At the same time Polk was strutting about and bluffing England over the Oregon territory. "The only way to treat John Bull is to look him straight in the eye," said Polk, proving, if nothing else, that Lyndon Johnson's coonskin-on-the-wall mentality has a long tradition in the White House.

To risk war with England, however foolish, was at least not a bullying act; but to provoke a war with Mexico most certainly was. The Mexican Army was a ragtag affair. Weems tells us: "Soldiers were allowed to hire themselves out as laborers, a largesse that kept some of them from starving, for food was almost as irregular and as scant as was pay. . . . Mexican troops on the move usually lived off the land through which they moved," and the land was often scarcely able to support its regular tenants.

Having little muscle, compared to the United States, Mexico was ready to negotiate over the annexation of Texas and the boundaries. But Polk did not want the negotiations to succeed, for without a war he could not extend his demands beyond Texas. So the negotiator he sent to Mexico, William S. Parrott, was the very fellow that, on other occasions, Mexican officials had come to hate. Meanwhile, U.S. troops were always pushing into tender areas along the Rio Grande in the hopes that some Mexican hotheads would become angry enough to fire on them. When, inevitably, this happened, Polk declared and, more to the point, implemented war. He did not wait for Congressional approval. It was another of those pious "Presidential wars" that most U.S. citizens have come to hate and fear so bitterly.

Here is President Polk in his war message to Congress:

> The cup of forbearance had been exhausted even before the recent information from the frontier of the Del Norte [Rio Grande]. But now, after reiterated menaces, Mexico has passed the boundary of the United States, has invaded our territory and shed American blood upon the American soil. She has proclaimed that hostilities have commenced, and that the two nations are now at war.
>
> As war exists, notwithstanding all our efforts to avoid it, exists by the act of Mexico herself, we are called upon by every consideration of duty and patriotism to vindicate with decision the honor, the rights, and the interests of our country. . . .

When one sees phrases like "cup of

Robert Sherrill's latest book is *The Saturday Night Special* (Charterhouse Books).

CAPPELBAUM'S RETREAT

The voice comes at you
the voice comes from you
and never lets up that voice
it arrives
with knuckles, teeth, bone
like a hammer in the flesh, vessels
open, drying
in the loud wind,
blood spurting from a water-gun:
if this is a game
I want to know the rules,
because that voice
is no child's toy, it steals
the air out of your mind,
covers you,
uncovers you, climbs
into bed with you,
puts iron filings in your
underwear, tears off skin
with the morning newspaper:
sometimes
you think you can get away
hiding behind mountains,
lifting stones,
covering your ears
with the good, thick meat
on the tender parts of your arms:
but that voice
that goddamned voice
spits through everything,
makes holes in faces. . . .

God or Devil, Argument
of Arguments:
all I want is a small cork
I can drive quietly
into my head.

Stanley Cooperman

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forbearance" and "reiterated menaces" and "vindicate with decision the honor," etc., it's enough to persuade one that since the very beginning of this country the White House has had a secret hideaway, probably in the cellar, where it has bred a special race of little turnip-headed gnomes who sit chained to desks cranking out war speeches. The great-grandchildren of Polk's turnip heads were writing virtually the same speeches for President Wilson; and another generation of turnip heads later, the same speech was being sent up from the cellar for President Roosevelt's use; and then came the turnip-headed replay for LBJ. The essential message is passed along in the cellar genes from generation to generation.

At one Cabinet meeting, when Secretary of State Buchanan proposed sending Britain a note guaranteeing that the conflict with Mexico was not intended to end with the acquisition of California, New Mexico or any other Mexican territory, President Polk furiously replied that "before I would make the pledge which he proposed I would meet the war which either England or France or all the powers of Christendom might wage, and that I would stand and fight until the last man among us fell in the conflict."

Does the irrationality of that frenzy of belligerency sound somewhat familiar?

Polk set the pattern, if a pattern was needed, for LBJ's action after the Tonkin Gulf farce, which left Congress feeling that it had only one way to go to protect its seeming patriotism: support the President. Actually, many members felt they had been stampeded into the war with Mexico; many members—including the notorious hothead John Calhoun—were against going to war and felt that we had not given our enemy a fair shake in the negotiations. But of course Calhoun and the others voted for men and equipment with which to prosecute the Mexican War—as did the so-called "opponents" of the war in Vietnam.

Ironically, no one was more opposed to Polk's war policy than the general who was fighting the war, Gen. Zachary Taylor, who wrote home to a friend of his distaste for "our ambitious views of conquest and aggrandisement at the expense of a weak power. . . ."

As the war proceeded, Polk's popularity in Congress did not exactly increase. Opposition to his war policy was still intense. Weems tells us, in terms that might just as well have been written about LBJ, "He recorded in his diary his share of anger, frustration, and prejudice. Much of his unhappiness evolved from his ideas about party loyalty. He believed any Democrat who opposed any part of his program to be a traitor to the party."

If there was much duplicity on our side, there was also some on the other side, largely supplied by the major Mexican villain of the 19th century, General Santa Ana. Ultimately he was despised by his own people who, referring to the limb he had lost, snickered at him behind his back as the "Immortal Three-Fourths." Nor, needless to say, was all the heroism on our side. Weems gives fair measure to the underdog courage of the Mexican Army and, of course, pays the necessary deference to the heroic cadets of Chapultepec. But for my taste, the most heroic men of the war that we are introduced to in Weems's history are thirty U.S. Army deserters. Having been tried and convicted and sentenced to be hanged,

> they had been prepared for execution in the plaza of Mixcoac, two miles from Chapultepec and well within sight of the place.
>
> They had been brought to the plaza early that morning, during the preliminary bombardment of the hill and the palace, and had been placed on scaffolds erected atop U.S. Army wagons. There they were told they would wait—standing, with their hands and feet bound and with ropes fastened around their necks—and witness the assault until the American flag appeared victoriously unfurled on the Chapultepec staff. Then they would die.
>
> When the colors suddenly flashed upon the distant pole the waiting teamsters and guards cheered, but the condemned men (for whatever reason) cheered loudest of all, as one witness remembered later. Drivers shouted to their teams, the wagons creaked, and the last members of the San Patricio Battalion died, dangling in Mexican sunshine.

I like to think that they died cheering, not because they welcomed U.S. victory, not out of some misplaced, sentimental Edward Everett Hale kind of patriotism, but instead as a final defiant gesture to all authority and especially to the misguided U.S. Army.

Some will say, of course, that even though the war was an evil one, the result—taking the United States to the Pacific—was a glorious one. It would be more logical to see the result of the Mexican War as tragic, providing perhaps the decisive thrust into the Civil War. For one thing, Northerners saw the annexation of Texas as adding another intolerable weight of slavery to the scales. But worse than that, the assault on Mexico, for material reasons and with spiritual excuses, plunged the nation into such deep cynicism that the word of the U.S. Government, and the word of all political leaders, was suspect—the kind of atmosphere which made a peaceful solution to the slavery question impossible.

Did we ever really recover from the cynicism of the Mexican War, and the cynicism of the Civil War that it helped provoke, and the cynicism of the endless chain of Presidential "peace-seeking" wars that followed? Probably not. At least it is very likely that our troubles today can be traced back to that time, in a roundabout way. "The war with Mexico," writes Weems, "resulted in the first real flexing of American muscles. The United States emerged as a country on its way to becoming a genuine world power—and history shows that any nation that has power uses it. Possessing a long coastline on the Pacific as well as the Atlantic, the United States began looking more closely at Asian developments, with the results that history already has recorded." □

An American Place

ABOUT PATERSON: The Making and Unmaking of an American City. *By Christopher Norwood. Saturday Review Press: Dutton. 256 pp. $8.95.*

MURRAY POLNER

Visitors to Paterson, N.J. take away with them a variety of impressions. The once dominating silk mills and their barons are no more, the buildings desolate and virtually empty, save for an occasional small business. The falls, named proudly after Alexander Hamilton who once hoped to develop the town into a national center for "manufactures," are scummy and vile. The business section, which for years sponsored a radio jingle, "Downtown Paterson Has Everything," now seems to have very little, its trade siphoned off to the massive shopping malls along the state's many highways and parkways. The last time I was in Paterson, with a camera, a policeman wandered by smiling, saying, "I hope you'll say something nice about us."

New Jersey is a raucous little state and Paterson a smallish city gone rancid. The city sits in Manhattan's back yard, ignored by New York's communications empire, overlooked by the big founda-

Murray Polner is editor of the journal Present Tense.

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tions, by-passed by the dispensers of federal generosity in Washington, held in contempt by the suburban masters in the state capital, Trenton. Its "respectable" families have retreated to shrinking enclaves, other whites have been driven out by urban renewal (with a resulting scandal of major proportions), and its blacks seem organizationally and politically a decade behind their counterparts elsewhere—or so Christopher Norwood believes to have been the case when she first arrived in Paterson in 1968. In addition, the city has a growing number of Puerto Ricans now, almost 15 per cent of the total population.

And there is more: Paterson may have been abandoned by others with more power and greater interests but it is still quite profitable for the cliques that continue to dominate its city hall. Corrupt, beset with conflicts of interest, Paterson is victimized as well by the fact that New Jersey (as Edmund Wilson once said) is the "slave of two cities," New York and Philadelphia, a classic commuter state which as far back as 1946 was nearly one-third suburban.

Christopher Norwood, who served for a time as a reporter and broadcaster for a local New Jersey TV station, has written a sometimes sermonizing, occasionally irritating Manichean book; but more important, *About Paterson* is a striking and stinging account of the mini-Watergates that continue to rule small-city America and its influence-peddling officials, frustrating the citizens and corrupting local government in general. Along the way she deals with the difficult questions. Who owns Paterson? Why was its urban-renewal scheme so bungled? Who profited and why weren't they punished? What are the sources of federal disdain for smaller cities? In attempting to discuss these complex subjects Norwood constructs her book about two disparate figures. The first is Frank X. Graves, one-time Mayor-strong man of Paterson's political life, a personality on the order of a Frank Hague or a James Curley, who had been, at least in retrospect, rather effective in controlling the police and holding the line on some of the more blatant examples of corruption. The second man, Lawrence F. "Pat" Kramer, a reform Republican, is the white knight current Mayor, one who likens himself, one imagines, to John V. Lindsay.

Kramer was first carried into office on a storm of rhetoric, in addition to the passions of amateur politicians and "concerned citizens" who were fed up with the old order. Like his counterpart in New York, he kept Paterson quiet for a while. Attractive, with money and a pedigree, possessed of a photogenic family, he became in the end a politician far more

NORTH ON INTERSTATE 71

At eighty only the very distant
(or the very near) seems real—

intermediate grassbank, river, wood,
and stubble-field blur and go bent

by windshield, dashboard, hand on wheel.
The ridge beyond the next is cloud.

Robert Wallace

gifted in style than substance. Like Lindsay, he could not harness his police. And with no Serpico, David Durk or enterprising reporters to goad him into action, Kramer sat paralyzed even when some cops allegedly began to assault black neighborhoods in the summer of 1968, becoming, Norwood writes, "a law unto themselves." Yet, in spite of growing opposition from blacks, from shopkeepers who were terrified of street crime, from Graves and others, Kramer managed to win a second term, and just recently a third. But even after eight years very little has changed, and ownership and governance are still essentially in the hands of the same groups as under Graves.

So who runs Paterson? Norwood says the muscle men do: the banks, contractors, realtors, organized crime, county prosecutors. "Nothing better illustrates the collapse of normal government functions in Passaic County than its administration of justice. The County Prosecutor had not tried one case during his eleven years in office. . . . All his staff were political appointees." She adds to this incredible record fascinating details about the rackets, the invasion of drug entrepreneurs, and the incredibly bungled efforts to indict the wrong people in the Kavanaugh-De Franco murder trial.

Moreover, as in many other localities, the Democrats and Republicans co-own Paterson on a log-rolling basis. "In the tangled web of Passaic County politics there were no real Republican and Democratic politics. There was a machine with a Republican branch and a Democratic branch which, as in many places, operated with mutual forbearance." In this instance the Dems ran the city and the Repubs the surrounding suburbs. The result was that Paterson became a "small, medieval duchy."

One wonders what can be done to alter this tradition of jobbery. To be sure, Watergate offers some tentative possibilities. Paterson—and much of small-city, suburban-county, rural America—needs a strong press employing skeptical, even nastily quizzical men and women; it needs desperately the Naders and Common Causes on a permanent basis, digging, suing, demanding access to public records and private deals; it needs powerful federal and state prosecutors who really believe in law and order and, one hopes, moral behavior; it needs all that and more. For social and economic change comes hard, and special, gifted individuals are necessary too. Men like LaGuardia, Richard Lee in New Haven and yes, despite all, Richard Daley, who can and do make things happen.

Norwood's excellent book touches all these bases, and allows us to hope that we shall soon be as inundated with analyses of how to enforce honesty in local government as we are with critiques of Nixon's maladministration. □

THEATRE / Harold Clurman

When, sometime in the late 1950s, I saw Lenny Bruce at the Establishment, he was certainly not at his best. He devoted most of his "act" to reading transcripts from his various trials at which he was charged with obscenity. At moments he interrupted his recital to complain of the indignities he suffered when the management of the hotel he was stopping at ordered him to leave on the ground that he was having sexual relations with a woman unregistered at the hotel.

As none of this was entertaining, Kenneth Tynan, who had invited me to share his enthusiasm for Bruce, called out "Do something, Lenny!" Bruce then began to regale the audience with one of his comedy routines. When asked my opinion, all I could say then and there was "There may be gold in the garbage."

Bruce died in 1966. In 1971 a play called *Lenny* was produced on Broadway; a biography by Albert Goldman has recently been published, and now at the Players Theatre, 115 MacDougal Street, *The World of Lenny Bruce*, a one-man show with Frank Speiser is being produced.

It consists of two sections. During the first Speiser does bits of Bruce's routines, after which he enacts pieces of Bruce's testimony in his own defense, to which Speiser adds a few telling items of factual information. I found the evening more

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revealing than the Broadway play, which was tricked out with "theatrics" which tended to obscure rather than illuminate the import of Bruce's unhappy career.

Speiser is excellent, though for reasons I will state further on, he does not suggest what was "sick" (the French word *malsain* is closer to my meaning) in the composition of Bruce's character. To acknowledge the failings of Bruce's personality not only avoids sentimentalizing him but leads to a better understanding of his significance and talent.

Bruce's life was disturbed and soiled by the physical, social and moral mess which city life on its lower levels often fosters. His attitude toward male sexuality, for instance, was distorted. He asserted with unconcealed pleasure that men are incapable of fidelity. But he was essentially intelligent, observant, extraordinarily receptive to a wide range of impressions. He was fundamentally honest and, for all that was coarse in him, he possessed an acute sensibility. He seems to have absorbed *everything* from his environment, so that while he was infested with its poisons, he was also sound enough to eject them in dismay, mockery and laughter. The result was ambiguous and, for those who are themselves balanced, largely salutary.

Bruce uncovered the sores of our urban life. He disclosed its filth and confusion without shame because he regarded them as the reality of contemporary existence. He thought them "funny" and was still keen enough to know that they were humanly destructive and that they had their source in the corruption of our society. His "art" was therefore partly a symptom of diseases of which we are victims and, in greater part, a curative. In this way it served a satiric function. If we do nothing but guffaw at its improprieties, we betray complicity with its negative aspects; if we also view it as evidence of what is noxious in the world about us, we must applaud it.

There are artistic as well as social reasons for doing so. Bruce's feeling for the vocabulary of our common speech is richly inventive. His language is a mishmash of gutter talk, the lingo of show business with all its clichés and the scrapings of sophistication such as a half-educated person of alert mind picks up. The mixture, through Bruce's natural volubility, becomes an amazing rhetoric, a poesy.

It would be worse than an exaggeration to call him the Genet of the night clubs, because for one thing the Frenchman's language is thoroughly classic; but like Genet, Bruce in his own way created a radiance out of squalor.

Bruce's savagery was (and is) socially stinging and valuably subversive, just as after another fashion the farcical antics of Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin were. Bruce's "insanity" made sense. He was not arraigned for his dirty words but for the accusations they implied, frightening to the custodians of "law and order."

The comedian was a tragic figure—and, when I saw him, looked it. He was dressed in black with something somberly clerical in his entire appearance. He was tall and handsome; his swarthy skin looked as if it were drawn tightly over a yellowish pallor. He never smiled at his own jokes and he shed no tears as he set forth the humiliations he had been subjected to. There was an air of doom about him.

Speiser, as I have indicated, does not convey this side of Bruce. He strikes us as good-natured and well-adjusted. He is amiably jovial in the first part of his performance and pathetically helpless in the second. Bruce had something severe, even hard about him, dignified withal. The timbre of his speech was rather nasal; Speiser speaks with tenor-like smoothness of tone. For just a "good time," Speiser is better. □

FILMS

ROBERT HATCH

Mordecai Richler is a Canadian Jewish novelist, so free himself of racial defensiveness that he can call the shots on his people with an utterly cool and frequently merry eye. He is, I would guess, rough fare for Jews who are not similarly dispassionate. In *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz,* a film for which Richler wrote the screenplay from his novel of that title, he creates a picaresque chronicle with deeply sobering overtones.

The picture is directed by the Canadian Ted Kotcheff, who keeps the action pitched to the manic energy of Richard Dreyfuss (*American Graffiti*) in the central role. Duddy Kravitz is a very poor boy whose advantages are good looks, quick wits and a bullying charm, and whose tragedy is that he mistakes success for a vocation. In the year or so we know him, he plunges up a series of roads to riches—cab driver, waiter in a resort hotel, movie producer, land speculator, dope smuggler, pinball magnate, forger. He works in the blouse factory of his rich uncle, who calls him a "pushy Jew boy"; he bribes and ingratiates his way to big tips at the summer hotel where he meets a big scrap dealer who teaches him that life is a war between the Jews and the "white men," but who admits that he set up his own partner for a manslaughter rap. Duddy engages a drunken British documentary film maker (Denholm Elliott) to shoot "home movies" for upwardly mobile families, an example of which, shown at length, is "Happy Bar Mitzvah, Bernie!" It starts off in a tone of middle-class sentimentality but shortly loses its way in alcoholic analogies to primitive blood rites, Hitlerian excesses, and a man who makes a living by chewing up razor blades. The surprisingly broad canvas of the film makes the guests thoughtful and had me guffawing.

But the Richler-Kotcheff film is on balance far from funny. In the first place, Duddy is not a nice young man. He lies and steals and worst of all he uses people without compunction, or indeed any realization that he shouldn't do so. He gets a rather simple fellow (Randy Quaid, who was the kleptomaniac sad sack of *The Last Detail*) to drive a truck for him, despite the fact that driving is no job for epileptics; he exploits the genuine love of a French-Canadian girl (Micheline Lanctôt) like so much money in the bank. When Virgil the epileptic cripples himself in a smash-up, she leaves Duddy, which puzzles him as much as it hurts him. A nastily superior

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TRAIN

I remember a train
that waited
on a siding between two towns.
In its dusty windows
are the faces I pass through each night
as I fall asleep.

Afternoon is a slow candle.
The day takes so long to burn down.

I spend my time packing,
filling suitcases with silence,
unpacking empty boxes,
looking for the train.

Rochelle Siegel

college boy working at the hotel remarks that people like Duddy keep anti-Semitism alive.

But beneath his cocksure abrasiveness, Duddy is perplexed. He doesn't understand how he gets away with so much; he is confused by the wraithlike demarcations of permissible success. Why, for example, should his Old-World grandfather, who has urged him to put his trust in land, turn from him in sorrow when, with promises and false signatures, he buys a whole beautiful lake, suitable for intensive development? At the end, Duddy has attained one tangible goal of his childhood—the proprietor of the corner lunchroom, where his father holds forth as the neighborhood character, allows Duddy to put a slice of pie and a coffee on the tab. That's success?

So Duddy, who came along after the first generation of immigrants had made good and could amuse themselves by challenging their juniors to do as well in an increasingly crowded rat race, is his own most conspicuous victim. A number of people have given him a lift, but no one has taken him seriously. He lashes out at his uncle, demanding to know what acts of love have given the older man the right to scorn him. And that is a question for which a philosophical Socialist who runs a sweatshop has no ready answer.

Duddy Kravitz is a remorseless picture beneath the wild energy and frequent slapstick. Nor can one define it in some narrowly Jewish context. Richler's larger purpose is to consider the means and ends equation, given the premise that men have never been able to place a moral value on success. That inability has long preoccupied writers—*Tom Jones* is the example that comes first to mind. Duddy is an apprentice sprinter, early in the race and easy to spot; more sophisticated runners gain polish and guile. On the surface, perhaps, it makes a difference. □

MUSIC / Richard Dyer

I've been two weeks in another town. In conjunction with the Cincinnati Summer Opera and the local College-Conservatory of Music, the Music Critics' Association has been holding a workshop. That is something to think about after I'm well away from it, but two of the performances here are worth thinking about now.

Incoherence is not the same thing as complexity, as the costly new production of Moussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* made clear. James de Blasis who "conceived" as well as directed the performance set two things going at once: an old-fashioned traditional production and a modern political and psychological one.

The traditional sets and costumes—which did indeed look as if more than $400,000 had been spent on them—emphasized the pastness of the past: the groupings, the textures, the colors looked as they might in an old varnished painting. The opera began with a huge projection of Pimen's parchment manuscript telling the story of Boris Godunov. This was already history.

But later projections, the political and psychological ones, interpreted history. At the end, for example, the projections of Byzantine saints that encircled the throne in the Duma were interpenetrated by projections of the Russian people and of a swirling protoplasmal substance, making a complex of ironic points about continuity and contrast and disorder and rebirth.

In brief moments like this the two kinds of production worked economically together. I thought of Woodrow Wilson's response to *Birth of a Nation* —"history written in lightning," a past flashingly illuminated by a present. But mostly the production didn't make simple sense. The solid, traditional sets failed to convey a minimum of necessary information—where are we? What time of day is it? Where is the Lithuanian border in relation to Moscow? And the projections frequently bore little relation to events on the stage. The images of a knife, of blood, of an engraving of the murdered Prince Dimitri which alternated with a photograph of Boris' own child, Feodor, presumably illustrate what is going on in the guilty Czar's mind. But the same pictures also come on whenever Pimen or Shouiskij allude to the murder.

Furthermore the projections consistently dwarfed the actual singers who were onstage. It is a measure of Norman Treigle's concentration and intensity that he was able to earn any attention at all. Though Treigle's voice is still strong, the range is shrinking and he is in the process of changing from the kind of Boris who sings into the kind who declaims the text. His theatrical personality remains vivid and individual: he closed the hallucination scene by crawling into the fetal position and huddling behind the globe his kingdom spans.

This production, made possible by a gift of the Corbett Foundation of Cincinnati, will be seen in a number of American cities in the next few years. The Corbetts' other gift this season was to bring over from Spoleto the Visconti production of Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*.

It too begins from a confused premise, but Visconti is the kind of theatrical genius who can overtake thought. There are no villains in this opera—the heroine is betrayed by what is false within. But Visconti shifts things around: there was a different virgin in this *Manon Lescaut*.

Oh, des Grieux did fool around a bit with the ladies of the chorus during the first act, but that didn't fool anybody. He was a gawky kid, and after the first encounter with Manon his hand went up to his mouth and a gee-whiz smile spread all over his face. You could hardly blame him, for Visconti had turned Manon into a knowing little baggage from the beginning, a feet-in-the-air sensualist who knows she's being watched even when she's just taking off her gloves.

In short this was a director's opera, and *Manon Lescaut* was bent to develop a familiar Visconti obsession—how a beautiful and innocent young man can be destroyed by a sensual woman. It happens to Farley Granger in *Senso* and it happens to Renato Salvatore in *Rocco and His Brothers*. It doesn't really work in *Manon Lescaut* because that isn't what Puccini and his librettists wrote the opera about. Despite Visconti's progressive dishevelment of the tenor, despite Manon's repeatedly dragging des Grieux down to the ground, the opera doesn't really focus on the fall of des Grieux. At the end we cannot weep for Manon as the music bids us do because nothing has happened to make us care anything about her.

Visconti himself was not here in Cincinnati. His assistant, Alberto Fassini, and a technical director came over from Italy along with the Spoleto sets and costumes; the conductor and five of the singers came with them. A lot

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of the performance looked sloppy, particularly events involving the local chorus, and the handsome, painterly sets of Lila de Nobili were unimaginatively lit. Nevertheless there were wonderful things all evening, and the span of the second act was clearly the work of a master of the stage—of the man who was responsible for the great theatrical career of Anna Magnani, the man whom Callas credits for turning her from a fat soprano into the actress we know.

De Nobili's set for that second act presents a closed, oppressive, self-reflecting world—there are two mirrors, no visible window, and a large nude portrait of a recumbent Manon; the angles of Geronte's bedroom are distorted and confining; the overdecoration is suffocating. All of this recalls the worlds of Visconti's color films *Senso, The Leopard, Death in Venice*—worlds depicted by an aristocrat who knows and loves them and condemned by the Marxist who realizes how destructive they are.

Manon herself exudes the decadent sexuality that Visconti associates with women. After taking a bath, she changes her clothes in the presence of a whole group of madrigalists; she takes her dancing lesson in her underclothes amid a group of men who apparently feel right at home. She spends a lot of time recumbent on the large bed that dominates the room—it is there that she sings *"In quelle trine morbide"* as her brother Lescaut fondles her foot (remembering old times?); it is to the bed that she immediately leads des Grieux, and when he sings that she is a temptress, her hands have moved up his leg (and in the position that they assume there is an exact foreshadowing of the one they will take on the plains of Louisiana at the hour of her death); it is behind the bed, the source of all her problems and her refuge from them, that Manon hides when the gendarmes come to arrest her.

The musical performance reflected what was going on onstage. Evidently Thomas Schippers, the conductor, wanted the fast passages to be feverish, though often they were merely hectic. Everything slower Schippers stretched out and fussed over; even the music became self-regarding, narcissistic. The orchestra, Schippers' own, followed him impeccably through every distortion. The minor roles were well taken by Angelo Romero (Lescaut) and Carlo del Bosco (a Geronte of dignity, no mere *buffo*).

Harry Theyard looked sympathetic as des Grieux and ran around a lot, presumably to show that the Chevalier is ardent, but he sang with more commitment than skill and with the unstable, grainy voice of a pushy *comprimario*. Nancy Shade, the Manon, sang two acts with a pout in the voice and with a lot of glidy pianissimo effects that inadequately compensated for her small and shrill vocal climaxes. The style, however, was excellent, and by the last-act aria she was singing more securely, so well, in fact, that for a moment a director's opera became a star turn. □

ART

LAWRENCE ALLOWAY

Exhibition catalogues are published to accompany exhibitions, but I want to discuss them separately as a literary genre. Ambitious exhibition catalogues do considerably more than describe the artists' works on the wall, arranged according to any of the various possible systems. When an exhibition is disassembled and the works returned to their scattered owners, the catalogues remain, useful for a duration beyond the few months in which the originals were in physical conjunction. Such catalogues are like art books, but with some differences. They are usually cheaper, because some of the costs are absorbed by the museum, and the physical glamor of art book production, which is expensive, is often not required. (People who complain about the high price of catalogues are comparing them to earlier, briefer catalogues.) Exhibition catalogues are less committed to a continuous discursive form of narrative than most art books, which enables the catalogue to present documentary information in discrete sections, logical units, rather than in one incorporative piece of prose. Chronology and bibliography, illustrations and provenance, are easily consultable, more usable than in the run of art books. One influence on this structure is the dissertation for a graduate degree, with its distinct systematic handling of types of information. The transfer of graduate studies to book form has its irritations and limits, but in terms of structural clarity its benefits should not be overlooked.

The solidification of the catalogue is a postwar phenomenon. Catalogues expanded beyond check lists and collections of illustrations in, for example, a remarkable series of Italian historical exhibitions in which, among other

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achievements, the canon of Caravaggio was authoritatively set. In the United States, the Museum of Modern Art produced a number of catalogues which achieved a similar comprehensiveness.

The revival of interest in the 19th century proceeds in journals and books, but the contribution of catalogues is a constituent part. Among several works that could be mentioned are two French and one American. *Equivoques*, shown at the Musée des Arts Decoratifs in Paris last year, is a study of French Salon art, with each illustrated work accompanied by contemporary criticism. It is a random alphabetical survey, from Adler (Jules) to Ziem (Felix-François-Georges Philibert); Adler's painting is of a labor subject, Ziem's a stepped-up version of Turner's Venetian painting, and in between is a battery of nudes, history pictures, genre scenes and allegories. (The catalogue is a detailed study of the French end of the international scene covered by "Le Salon Imaginaire" at the Kunstverein, Berlin, in 1968.) This spring at the Grand Palais, Paris, there was an exhibition called "Ossian," an extraordinary survey of the pictorialization of the primal myths of the poem. Texts by Werner Hofmann and Daniel Ternois trace the theme's ramifications from James Macpherson's publication of his forgeries in the 1760s across Europe in astonishing detail, including Ingres' "Le Songe d'Ossian."

An American exhibition of great interest, originated at the University Art Museum, Berkeley, was the occasion of a catalogue called *The Hand and the Spirit: Religious Art in America 1700-1900*, the work of Jane Dillenberger and Joshua Taylor. Like a number of the best recent catalogues, it is not monographic but thematic in its approach, a search for larger unifying groupings than that of personal identity. The intertwining, sometimes close, sometimes relaxed, of religious and artistic traditions is admirably handled. So, too, is the problem of discriminating specifically American shades and flavors in the junction of ideas. (Although the catalogue stops before our time, the sense of sententious revelation has certainly not been lost to 20th-century American artists.)

Three catalogues treat recent American paintings in ways at variance with one another, but each is representative of a general approach. *American Art: Third Quarter Century* at the Seattle Art Pavilion last year is a catalogue that is a survey of art defined by the succession of successful movements. Jan van der Marck's text follows the received contour of events placidly, according equable praise to the sculpture of David Smith, John Chamberlain and Charles Biederman, and a similar bland expansiveness takes in all the painters. When he writes of an artist that he "would make a credible cross between Huck Finn and Paul Klee" he is writing PR, not criticism. The text rests on this assumption: "There can be little argument about the third quarter of this century having produced the country's most interesting art to date. Emancipated, at last, from European influence, the American artist's capacity for formal innovation proved prodigious and his standards of excellence unparalleled." Well, as readers of this column know, I like it, too, though not quite in these words. Max Kozloff wrote an extraordinary introduction to *Twenty-Five Years of American Painting* at the Des Moines Art Center, 1963. The art in that show was comparable to that at Seattle, roughly Albers to Warhol, but Kozloff was roused against the prevailing "self-congratulatory mood," typified by van der Marck. Kozloff argued that the detachment, rationality and high acceptance of 1960s artists were analogues of the values of the cold war and the affluent society. This tough and skeptical text is essential reading to anyone interested in the evaluation of modern art; it is one of the first (there are more to come) to bring the dissatisfactions of the 1970s to bear on the flourishing movements of the 1960s.

The third catalogue of American art is different again: its organizers would scorn van der Marck's jolly permissiveness and dismiss Kozloff's conscience as beyond art. "The Great Decade of American Abstraction: Modernist Art 1960 to 1970," was the inaugural show this year at the Brown Pavilion, Mies van der Rohe's extension to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. (Another case of Kozloff's allegation as to the compatibility of big money and acquiescent art.) The word "modernist" in the subtitle is a tip-off: this term is not a general one like "modern," though it pretends to be; it has come to be associated with the corner of modern art that Clement Greenberg likes. What an early 20th-century exhibition of 18th-century English portrait painters would have been to Duveen's taste, this exhibition is to Greenberg's. Of the Abstract Expressionists: Gottlieb, Hofmann, Louis, Motherwell, Newman, Rothko, Smith and Still; of the second-generation "modernists": Darby Bannard (unexpectedly promoted), Jack Bush, Antony Caro, Friedl Dzubas, Helen Frankenthaler, Kenneth Noland, Jules Olitski, Larry Poons and Frank Stella. The second generation includes two artists of the same age as the Abstract Expressionists (Bush and Dzubas), but the timing of their entry into "modernism" identifies them with the younger artists. There is a dead orthodox text by E.A. Carmean, Jr. who is credited in the bibliography with a catalogue, *Toward Color and Field*, obviously related to the present one. There is a tedious selection of overfamiliar reprints by writers who agree, or have agreed, with Greenberg, and a section on the Conservation of Color Field paintings which will be useful to collectors and dealers. Oddly, where the 19th-century catalogues mentioned above are expanding their fields of inquiry, this catalogue of recent and new art is trying to close its field down to a strict set of rules.

A limitation of monographs is that, since they handle one artist at a time, they tend to isolate the individual from his colleagues and the rest of the culture. Studies of modern sculpture have been largely monographic but this situation is being remedied by, among others, John Elderfield, Edward Fry and Albert Elsen. The first result is "Pioneers of Modern Sculpture," an exhibition at the Hayward Gallery, London, last year, that was prepared by Elsen. His catalogue, published by the Arts Council of Great Britain, is a clear survey under three heads: the Salon, Pioneers and Reliefs. The last section, which emphasizes the significance of assembled flat sculpture, is exceptionally interesting. Another and more broadly synoptic catalogue accompanied and now survives the exhibition at the Detroit Institute of Arts and the Palazzo Pitti, Florence, of late Baroque art in Florence, 1670-1743. Its dramatic title is *The Twilight of the Medici*. On the scale of a Council of Europe catalogue, it is a cross section of all the arts, viewed in an unfamiliar cultural milieu. For all its bulk, the publication, as so often with well-designed catalogues, is easily consultable. □

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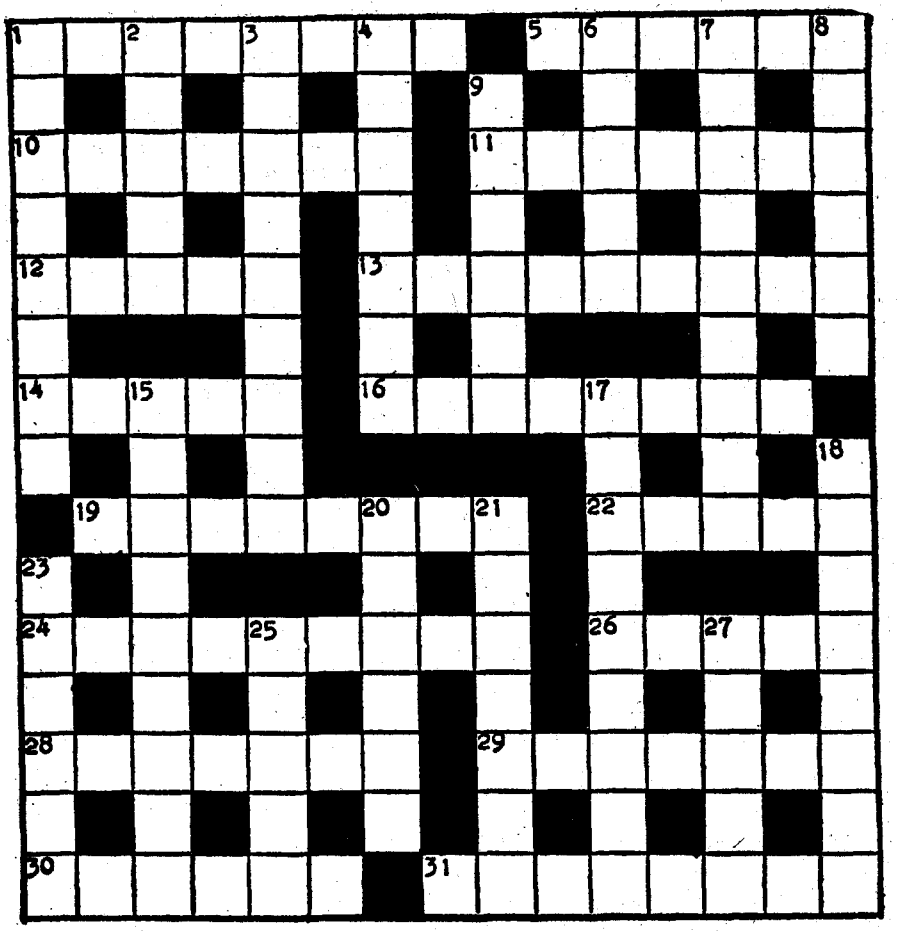
FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Is wine on the house where tourists sometimes shop? (4,4)
5 You might associate one with a prayerful attitude. (6)
10 and 11 Not the parquet design between floors—though many a comedown is effected by it. (7,7)
12 Set in place. (5)
13 Incisive with the ditch worker? (9)
14, 16 and 25 down Implying similarity between stocks when divided equally. (5,3,5,5)
19 Centaur? (Rather equestrian.) (8)
22 Worker with mother, commonly, and her offspring. (5)
24 Playing group and what one of them might deliver, being thrown out. (4,5)
26 Plant a little spike in return. (5)
28 Editing starts at the end of the office building. (7)
29 Part of a sitting body on a building projection is often crested. (7)
30 Wanted to be 50 less than 21. (6)
31 Wary of the cutting surface, particularly since it's sideways? (8)

DOWN

1 What a historical librarian might do? March this way, perhaps. (4,4)
2 Birds in another nest? (5)
3 So one hasn't scored, but such things don't matter! (9)
4 A target improperly set up for competition in the main, perhaps. (7)
6 Greek story? (5)
7 Ruth's upset about Jacob's brother—you might expect words here! (9)
8 Dimly seen when getting around at a legislative gathering. (6)
9 A very quiet finish to hang on. (6)
15 It might get to be more than 15 years, but it's reputedly not a pleasant way to spend one's time! (1,4,4)
17 I'd be mortified to eat it, but more properly you don't need what it starts with. (6-3)
18 Get out the kinks, but it's relative without a personal viewpoint, perhaps. (8)
20 They used to be so protected, but now it's merely dispatched. (6)
21 Perhaps made to get the point, not too politely. (7)
23 Choose the best for film showing! (6)
25 See 14 across
27 Elsewhere, they might excuse your having one. (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1547

ACROSS: 1 Transfer papers; 8 Evidentially; 10 About faces; 11 Menu; 13 Ladder; 14 Outmarch; 16 Notarial; 17 Tom-cat; 19 and 18 Wait and see; 20 Cannon-ball; 22 Plain sailing; 23 Uninvited guest. DOWN: 1 The Wailing Wall; 2 A minor detail; 3 Sweetheart; 4 Entrap; 5 Played up; 6 Pelt; 7 Brought to light; 9 Depreciative; 12 Impounding; 15 Harakiri; 21 Plan.

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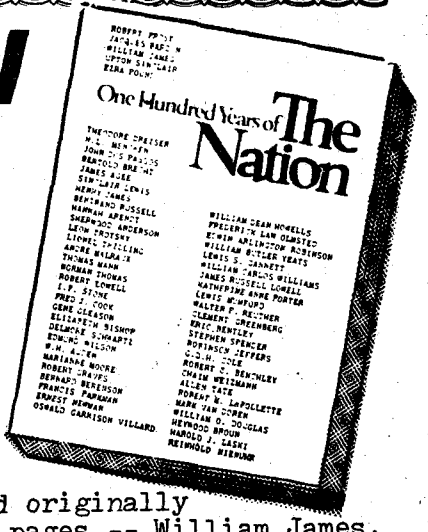

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